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THE

Atheistical Objections,

AGAINST THE

BEING of a GOD,

And His ATTRIBUTES,

Fairly *Considered*, and Fully *Refuted*.

IN

Eight Sermons,

Preach'd in the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*, *London*, 1698. Being the Seventh Year of the LECTURE Founded by the Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the *King's-Head* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1698.

Immorality *and* Pride,

The Great Causes of

ATHEISM.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,
January the 3^d. 169⅞.

BEING

The First of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the
King's-Head in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1698.

Immortality and Virtue,

in Contrast to

ATHEISM.

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

January the 5th, 1795,

at the

Lecture founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.

by WILLIAM PARR, M.A.

and F. Chap. to the Right Reverend

LONDON,

Printed by T. C. for Robert Baldwin, in the

Year MDCCXCV.

TO THE

Most Reverend Father in God

THOMAS

Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*;

Sir HENRY ASHURST Baronet;
Sir JOHN ROTHERAM Serjeant at Law;
JOHN EVELYN Senior Esquire;

Trustees appointed by the Will of the Honorable *ROBERT BOYLE* Esquire.

Most Reverend and Honoured,

AS *I had the Honour to Preach this Sermon by your Kind and Generous Appointment, so I now Publish it in Obedience to your Commands, and humbly offer it, as also my ensuing Discourses, to your Candid Patronage and Acceptance. I have (in pursuance of Your Grace's direction) studied to be as Plain and Intelligible as possibly I could,*

and ſhall, by the Divine Aſſiſtance, proſecute my whole Deſign *after the ſame manner; which Method of Treating this Subject, appears very Suitable to the Pious and Excellent Deſign of Our Noble and Honourable Founder.*

I humbly deſire your Prayers to Almighty God, that He will vouchſafe to render my weak Endeavours effectual to ſhew the Groundleſsneſs and Inconcluſiveneſs of thoſe Objections *which Atheiſtical Men uſually bring againſt the great and Important Truths of Religion; which is the End they are ſincerely directed to, by*

Moſt Reverend and Honoured,

Your moſt obliged

humble Servant,

J. HARRIS.

Psalm X. 4.

The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance, will not seek after God : Neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN this Psalm is Contained a very lively Description of the Insolence of Atheistical and Wicked Men, when once they grow Powerful and Numerous; for then, as we read at the Third Verse, they will proceed so far, as openly *to boast of and glory in* their Impiety : They will boldly *defie and contemn the great God* of Heaven and Earth, v. 13. They will *deny his Providence*, v. 11. *and despise his Vengeance :* And, as we are told in these words of my Text, They will grow so Proud and high, as to scorn to pay him any Honour or Worship, to Pray to him or *Call upon him*; but will endeavour to banish the very Thoughts of his Being out of their Minds. *The Wicked through the Pride of his*, &c.

In which words, we have an Account more particularly, by what *Methods* and *Steps* Men advance to such an Exorbitant height of Wickedness, as to set up for Atheism, and to deny the Existence of a God ; for there are in them these Three Particulars, which I shall consider in their Order.

I. Here is the general Character or Qualifications of the Person the Psalmist speaks of; which is, That *he is a Wicked Man. The Wicked through the Pride*, &c.

II. The

II. The *particular kind of Wickedneſs*, or the *Origin* from whence the Spirit of Atheiſm and Irreligion doth chiefly proceed; And *That is Pride. The Wicked through the Pride of his Countenance*, &c. And,

III. Here is the *great Charge* that is brought againſt this Wicked and Proud Man; viz. *Wilful Atheiſm and Infidelity: He will not ſeek after God: Neither is God in all his Thoughts:* Or, as it is in the Margin of our Bibles, with good Warrant from the Hebr. *All his Thoughts are there is no God.*

In diſcourſing on the two Firſt of theſe Heads, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, that *Immorality* and *Pride* are the great Cauſes of the Growth of Atheiſm amongſt us: And on the Third, I ſhall conſider the Objections that Atheiſtical Men uſually bring againſt the being of a Deity, and ſhew how very weak and invalid they are.

And firſt I think it very Neceſſary to ſay ſomething of *the Cauſes* of Infidelity and Atheiſm, and to ſhew how it comes to paſs that Men can poſſibly arrive to ſo great a height of Impiety. This my Text naturally leads me to, before I can come to the great Subject I deſign to Diſcourſe upon; and I hope it may be of very good uſe to diſcover *the Grounds* of this heinous Sin, and the *Methods* and *Steps* by which Men advance to it; that ſo thoſe who are not yet hardened in it, nor quite given up to a Reprobate Mind, may, by the Bleſſing of God, take heed, and avoid being engaged in ſuch Courſes as do naturally lead into it.

I. Therefore

I. Therefore let us consider the general Character or Qualifications of the Person here spoken of in my Text; And that is, that he is a *Wicked Man. The wicked through the Pride,* &c.

And this is every where the Language of the Sacred Scripture, when it speaks of Atheistical Men. *David* tells us (*Psal.* 14. 1. and 51. 1.) that 'tis the *Fool* (i. e. the *Wicked Man,* for so the word *Nabal* often signifies, and is so *here* to be understood) 'Tis he that hath said *in his heart there is no God.* 'Tis such an one as is a *Fool* by his own fault; one stupified and dull'd by Vice and Lust, as he sufficiently explains it afterwards; *one that is corrupt and become filthy, and that hath done abominable works.* So the Apostle St. *Paul* supposes, that those Men *will have in them an evil heart of unbelief,* who do *depart from the living God*, and *live without him in the world.* And indeed, it is very Natural to conclude, That those which are once debauched in their *Practices,* may easily grow so in their *Principles:* For when once 'tis a Man's Interest that there should be no God, he will readily enough disbelieve his Existence: We always give our assent very precipitantly to what we wish for, and would have to be true. A Man oppressed with a Load of Guilt, and conscious to himself, that he is daily obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance, will be often very uneasie, restless, and dissatisfied with himself, and his Mind must be filled with Dismal and Ill-boding Thoughts. He is unwilling to leave his Sins, and to forego the present Advantage of Sensual Pleasure; and yet

he cannot but be fearful too, of the Puniſhments of a Future State, and vehemently diſturbed now and then, *about the account that he muſt one day give of his Actions.*

Now, 'tis very Natural for a Man under ſuch Circumſtances, to catch at any thing that doth but *ſeem* to offer him a little Eaſe and Quiet, and that can help him to ſhake off his melancholy Apprehenſion of impending Puniſhment and Miſery. Some therefore bear down all Thought and Conſideration of their Condition, in an uninterrupted enjoyment of Senſual Delights, and quite ſtupifie and drown their Conſcience and Reaſon in continual Exceſſes and Debauchery; and thus very many commence Atheiſts, out of downright Sottiſhneſs and Stupidity, and come at laſt to *believe* nothing of the Truths of Religion, becauſe they never *think* any thing about it, nor *underſtand* any thing of it. Others, who have been a little enured to thinking, and have gotten ſome ſmall ſmattering in the ſuperficial Parts of Learning, will endeavour to defend their wicked Practices by ſome pretence to Reaſon and Argument. Theſe will one while juſtifie their Actions, by forced and wreſted Citations and Explications of ſome particular Texts of Scripture; at another time they will ſhroud themſelves under the Examples of the Prevarications of ſome great Men in Sacred Scripture, as a Licence to them, to be guilty of the ſame or the like wicked Acts; without conſidering at all, of their great Penitence afterwards. Sometimes they will diſpute the Eternity of Hell Torments, deny that their Soul ſhall ſurvive

ſurvive the Body, and pleaſe themſelves with the glorious hopes of being utterly annihilated. Now they will argue againſt the Freedom of their *own Wills*; and by and by, againſt that of the *Divine Nature:* and from *both* conclude, that there can be no harm nor evil in what they do, becauſe they are abſolutely neceſſitated to every thing they commit. But againſt all this precarious ſtuff, the Sacred Scriptures do yet appear and afford a ſufficient Refutation. The next Step therefore muſt be to *quarrel* at, and *expoſe* them; to pretend that there are *Abſurdities*, *Contradictions* and *Inconſiſtencies* in them: To aſſert that the Religion they contain, is nothing but a meer Human and Political Inſtitution, and the Invention of a Crafty and deſigning Order of Men, to promote their own Intereſt and Advantage; but that they are of no manner of Divine Authority, nor Univerſal Obligation. And when once they get thus far, they begin to be at Liberty; now they can purſue their vicious Inclinations without controul of their Conſciences, or the Conviction of God's holy Word, and are got above the Childiſh Fears of Eternal Miſery. By this time, the true and through *Calenture* of Mind begins; they grow now deliriouſly enamoured with the feign'd Products of their own Fancies; and theſe Notions appear to them now, adorned with ſuch bright and radiant Colours, and ſo beautiful and glorious, that they will ruſh headlong into this *Fools Paradiſe*, though Eternal Deſtruction be at the bottom; for now they ſtick at nothing; They Retrench the Deity of all his Attributes, abſolutely deny his Preſidence over the Affairs of the World,

and make him nothing but a kind of *neceſſary and blind Cauſe of things*, *Nature*, *the Soul of the World*, or ſome ſuch word, which they have happened to meet with in the Ancient Heathen Writers. But they Profeſs that 'tis impoſſible to have any *Idæa* of him at all; and what they cannot conceive or have an *Idæa* of, they ſay is *nothing*, and by Conſequence there can be no ſuch thing as a God. This, or ſuch like, I'm perſwaded is the uſual Method, by which theſe kind of Men advance to abſolute Infidelity and Atheiſm: And in this, they are every ſtep confirmed and eſtabliſhed by the ſeeming Wit, and real Boldneſs, with which Atheiſtical Men dreſs up their Arguments and Diſcourſes; and of which, if they were ſtripped and diveſted, their weakneſs and inconcluſiveneſs muſt needs appear to every one. But the Mirth and Humour, and that Surpriſing and Extravagant Vein of talking which always abounds in the Company of ſuch Men, ſo ſuits and agrees with his own vicious Inclinations, that he becomes eaſily prejudiced againſt the Truth of Religion, and any Obligation to its Precepts and Injunctions: And ſo he will ſoon reſolve *to ſeek no more after God*, but will employ all his Thoughts to prove that there is no ſuch Being in the World.

But on the other hand, it appears wholly impoſſible for a Man to arrive at ſuch a pitch as abſolute Infidelity and Atheiſm, if he hath been virtuouſly Educated, and be enclined to live a Sober and a Moral Life. For there is certainly nothing that Religion enjoins, but what is exactly agreeable

to

to the Rules of Morality and Virtue; nothing but what is conformable to right Reaſon and Truth; nothing but what is ſubſtantially good and pleaſant, and nothing but what will approve it ſelf to a thinking Mind, as certainly conducing to the good of Human Society, and to every one's Quiet, Eaſe, and Happineſs here in this Life: And over and above this, it gives us an aſſurance of a glorious Immortality in the World to come.

Now, Can it be imagined, that any ſober and virtuous Man, and one that is not prejudiced by the Inducements of Senſual Pleaſure, if he ſeriouſly conſiders things, will not be induced to take upon him the Profeſſion of our holy Religion: and with all due Gratitude to our Gracious God, accept of ſo vaſt a Reward as this of Eternal Happineſs? Eſpecially too when it is for doing that only out of a *true Principle of Religion*, which it is ſuppoſed he was inclined to perform without it, by the *Principles of Reaſon and Honour.* A Man that is enclined to live virtuouſly, juſtly, temperately, and peaceably in this preſent World, will ſoon be ſatisfied, if he read the Holy Scriptures, that it is *this* which lies at the Bottom of all Revealed Religion, and for whoſe Advancement and Propagation among Mankind, all that gracious Diſpenſation was contrived and delivered to us. What reaſon can therefore be poſſibly aſſigned, why ſuch a Perſon ſhould disbelieve the *Truths* of Religion? Is not a deſire of Happineſs ſo Natural to us, that 'tis the great Inducement of all our Actions? and will not every Man aim to get as much of this as he can, according to the Notion

he

he hath of it? what is there then that can prejudice ſuch a Man's Mind againſt the Belief and Expectation of a future Reward at the hand of God? Is it not Natural to embrace any offer that propoſes to us a great Advantage? and are not we very ready to believe the Truth of any thing that is advanced of that Nature? The Great Truths therefore of Religion, containing nothing impoſſible, abſurd or improbable in them, and exhibiting to him Infinite Advantages on ſuch eaſie Conditions, muſt needs be the delightful Objects of a *Good* and *Virtuous* Man's Faith. He, indeed, that hath juſt Grounds to fear that his Irregular Life will incapacitate him for the Favour of God, and the Joys of another World, may be willing, and at laſt infatuated ſo far, as really to disbelieve what he knows he cannot obtain. But one that is of a Moral, Sober and Virtuous Diſpoſition, can never be ſuppoſed to be ſo unaccountably abſurd, as to commence Atheiſt contrary to his *Intereſt*, his *Inclination*, and his *Reaſon*.

And as 'tis hardly poſſible to conceive a Perſon can be an Atheiſt, without being firſt *Wicked*; ſo it appears as difficult to imagine, that if he be an Atheiſt, he ſhould not continue to be *ſo*. I know the Contrary is often pretended; *viz.* That one that believes nothing of a God or Religion, may yet be, and often is guided by a Principle of *Reaſon and Honour, and will do to others as he would be done unto himſelf*: Such an one (*it is ſaid*) will be ſatisfied of the Neceſſity of Humane Laws, and of the Advantages that do thence ariſe to Mankind: He will think himſelf obliged to ſubmit to the Laws of his

his Country, and conſequently will keep up to the Rules of common Juſtice and Honeſty; and this (ſay they) is enough, and all that Religion can pretend to enjoin. (*a*) There is a late French Author, that endeavours to maintain by Arguments and Examples, that the Principles of Atheiſm do not neceſſarily lead to Vice and Immorality. But in the Proof of this, he comes very ſhort of his Deſign. He alledges, That *ſome* Profeſſing Chriſtianity have always, and do ſtill, live as bad Lives and as wickedly as any Atheiſts whatſoever can do: And that ſome Atheiſts have lived very Regularly and Morally. But what then? Allowing and granting all this; it doth not in the leaſt follow that Atheiſm doth not lead to Immorality and a Corruption of Manners. For it is neither aſſerted that Atheiſm is the *only way* of becoming Wicked; nor that an Atheiſt muſt neceſſarily be guilty *of all manner of Vice.* No doubt very many Men betake themſelves to a ſinful Courſe, without having any Principles to juſtifie themſelves by, as the Atheiſt pretends to: But are drawn into Wickedneſs purely by Incogitancy and want of Conſideration. And ſuch kind of Perſons, though they make an outward Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, yet they may be, and doubtleſs often are, as Vicious and Immoral as any other Men, without ever arriving at the Point of *Speculative Atheiſm*, or perhaps without ever ſo much as doubting of the Being of a God, of the Truth of Religion, or of a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments. No one ſaith alſo that an Atheiſt muſt neceſſarily be guilty of *all manner of Vice and Immorality*: But 'tis plain enough, that his Principles lead him to proſecute *any vicious Inclination* that is ſuitable to

(*a*) *Penſees diverſes Ecrites à un Docteur de* Sorbonne *à l'Occaſion de la Comète qui parut au Mois de* Decembre, 1680. Rotterdam. 8vo.

to him, and to do *any thing* that he can ſafely, to procure to himſelf that kind of Happineſs or Satisfaction he propoſes to enjoy. Many Sins are diſagreeable to ſome particular Periods and Circumſtances of a Man's Life, to his Conſtitution, Genius and Humour. Now 'tis eaſie to ſuppoſe a Man may abſtain from *ſuch*, for his own Eaſe, Health and Quiet's ſake. *Self-Love* will preſerve the Atheiſt from ſuch open and notorious Acts of Wickedneſs, as will expoſe him to the Capital Puniſhment of Human Laws; and which will endanger depriving him of his Being here, where he only propoſes to be happy. This Principle alſo of *Self-Love*, will hinder him from expoſing himſelf to Ignominy and Scandal; and will make him endeavour to keep fair in the Opinions of thoſe whoſe diſeſteem would give him a great degree of Unhappineſs. But it doth not in the leaſt follow from hence, that becauſe he is not guilty of *all manner*, or of *this* or *that* particular Vice, that therefore he is a good Moral Man, and guilty of *none at all:* It cannot be concluded from hence, that ſuch a Perſon will avoid committing any Fact, be it never ſo Wicked, when it is ſtript of all theſe Inconveniences, and can be done ſecretly, ſafely and ſecurely: when 'tis agreeable to his Conſtitution and Humour, faſhionable and gentile, and contributes very much to that kind of Satisfaction he is inclin'd to; for as one that had conſider'd this Point well, obſerves, *Self-Love, which like Fire covets to reſolve all things into it ſelf, makes Men they care not what Villany or what Impiety they Act, ſo it may but conduce to their own Advantage.* (Preface to *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians.) And indeed, if he be not abſolutely

lutely Stupid, and one that proposes to himself no manner of End at all, he will certainly do this very thing: He will pursue and practise Indifferently such kind of Designs and Actions, be they good or bad, as will give him as much Pleasure and Happiness as he can have here in this short Life, where, Miserable Wretch as he is, *he only hath any hope*. And nothing can nor will hinder such a Person from endeavouring to do or obtain any thing he hath a Mind to, but the fear of being exposed to Punishment and Misery *here*, from those among whom he lives. Now, this Consideration can have no place in *secret* Actions, and consequently nothing will hinder a Man of these abominable Principles from committing the most barbarous Villany that is consistent with his Safety, and subservient to his Desires; that can be either concealed in Secresie, or supported by Power. For, as to the *Principle of Honour*, that such Men will pretend to be governed and guided by, and which they would set up to supply the Room of Conscience and Religion; 'tis plain, that 'tis the veriest Cheat in Nature: 'tis nothing but a meer abusive Name, to gull the World into a Belief that they have some kind of Principle to act and proceed by, and which keeps them from doing *an Ill Thing*: Whereas the Atheist can have no Principle at all, but that sordid one of *Self Love*; which will still carry him to the perpetrating of any thing indifferently, according as it best conduces to his present Interest and Advantage. They deny that there are any Actions truly Good or Honourable, or Wicked and Base in themselves; but that this is all owing to the peculiar Customs, Laws, and Constitutions

of Places and Countries: And that as *all Men* are, ſo *Actions* alſo, are naturally equal and alike: And how far ſuch Notions as theſe will carry Men, 'tis very eaſie both to *Imagine* and to *Obſerve*. One would think nothing could be more Noble, Honourable and Comely, than for a Man to ſtick firm and conſtant to thoſe Principles that he pretends to, and by no means whatever to be brought to abjure and deny them. *Sincerity* is ſo lovely and deſirable a Vertue, that it doth approve it ſelf, as it were naturally, to the reaſon of all Mankind: and 'tis equally Uſeful, nay, indeed Neceſſary, to the due Government of the World. But this Noble Virtue, ſo peculiar to a Man of True honour and greatneſs of Mind, the Atheiſt will practiſe no longer than it is for his *Intereſt* and *Advantage*, and while it is conſiſtent with his Safety. That Men may profeſs or deny any thing to ſave their Lives, is the avowed Principle of one of their great Writers. And the ſame is expreſly aſſerted in other words, even in leſſer Caſes than that of Danger of Death, by the Tranſlator of *Philoſtratus*'s Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with a great Pretence to Wit and Humour. But if Men may Lye and Prevaricate from ſo baſe and abject a Principle as *Fear*, no doubt they may do ſo for *Intereſt* and *Advantage*, for that is certainly as good a ground, as Cowardlineſs and Baſeneſs; and then what becomes of this boaſted *Honour* that is ſo much talk'd of; this *greatneſs of Mind*, that will keep a Man from *doing* an *ill thing*. In reality, 'twill at laſt amount to no more than this, that he will forbear doing *an Ill Thing*, when he

he thinks it will *prove ill to him :* he will be Juſt, Honeſt and Sincere when he *don't dare* be otherwiſe, for fear of the Law, Shame, and Ignominy : For all Men of Atheiſtical Principles would be Knaves and Villains *if they durſt*, if they could do it ſafely and ſecurely : ſuch a Man ('tis like) ſhall return you a Bag of Money, or a rich Jewel you happen to depoſe in his Hands; but why is it ? 'tis becauſe he *dares* not keep it and deny it ; 'tis great odds but he is *diſcovered* and *expoſed* by this means; and beſides, 'tis Unfaſhionable and Ungenteel to be a Cheat in ſuch Caſes. But to impoveriſh a Family by Extravagance and Debauchery , to defraud Creditors of their juſt Debts, or Servants of their Wages, *to Cheat at Play*, to violate one's Neighbour's Bed to gratifie one's own Luſt, are things, which though to the full as Wicked and Unreaſonable in themſelves, are yet ſwallowed down as allowable enough, becauſe common and uſual, and which are not, the more is the pity, attended with that Scandal and Infamy that other Vices are. Thus 'tis very plain, that this pretended Principle of Honour in an Atheiſt or a Wicked Man, and this Obedience and Deference that he pretends to pay to the Laws of his Country, is a moſt *Partial* and *Changeable* thing, and vaſtly different from that true Honour and Bravery that is founded on the Eternal Baſis of Conſcience and Religion ; 'tis an Airy Name that ſerves only to amuſe unthinking and ſhort-ſighted Perſons into a Belief, that he hath ſome kind of Principles that he will ſtick to ; that ſo he may be thought fit to be *truſted, dealt* and *converſed withall* in the World.

And thus, I think, it is very clear and apparent that Wickedneſs naturally leads to Infidelity and Atheiſm, and Infidelity and Atheiſm to the Support and Maintenance of That: And that *it is the Wicked that will not ſeek after God, and whoſe thoughts are that there is no God.* Which was my Firſt Particular.

I come next to Conſider,

II. That Peculiar Kind of Wickedneſs which the Pſalmiſt here takes notice of, as the chief Ground from whence Infidelity and Atheiſm proceed: And that is *Pride. The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance will not ſeek after God, neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

And I queſtion not but this Vice of *Pride*, is generally the Concomitant of Infidelity, and the chief Ground from whence the Spirit of *Speculative Atheiſm* proceeds. When Men of proud and haughty Spirits lead ill Lives, as they very often do, they always endeavour to juſtifie themſelves in their Proceeding, be it never ſo Irregular and Abſurd, and never ſo contrary to the conſiderate Sentiments of all the reſt of the World. A Proud Man hates to acknowledge himſelf in an Errour, and to own that he hath committed a Fault: He would have the World believe that there is a kind of *Indefectibility* in his Underſtanding and Judgment, which ſecures him from being deceived and miſtaken like other Mortals. Whatever Actions therefore ſuch a Perſon commits, he would fain have appear reaſonable and juſtifiable. But he ſees plainly that he cannot make Wicked-

Wickedneſs and Immorality do ſo, as long as Religion ſtands its Ground in the World. The Sacred Scriptures are ſo plain and expreſs againſt ſuch a courſe of Life, that there is no avoiding being convicted and condemned while their Authority remains good: 'Tis impoſſible any way to reconcile a vicious Life to the Doctrine *there* delivered: And therefore he ſees plainly, That one that Profeſſes to believe the great Truths of Religion, and the Divine Authority of thoſe Sacred Books, and yet by his Practices gives the Lye to his Profeſſion, and while he acknowledges Jeſus Chriſt *in his Words*, *doth in his Works deny him*; he ſees, I ſay, that ſuch an one ſtands αὐτοκατάκριτος, Self-condemned, and can never acquit himſelf either to his own Conſcience, or to the Reaſon of Mankind. Now this is perfectly diſagreeable to the Genious and Humour of a Proud Man; he cannot bear to be thought in any reſpect Incoherent or Inconſiſtent with himſelf: And therefore having vainly tried to juſtifie himſelf in his Wickedneſs, by alledging the Examples of ſome good Men in Sacred Scripture, that have been guilty of great Sins, but whoſe Repentance he can by no means digeſt: And having alſo fruitleſsly endeavoured to rely on the *perverted Senſe* of ſome particular Texts of Scripture, which he knows are ſufficiently refuted by the *Analogy* of the whole; he finds at laſt that 'tis the beſt way to deny the Divine Authority of the Bible, and the Truth of all Revelation, and ſo boldly ſhake off at once all Obligation to the Rules of Piety and Virtue; and ſince Religion can't be wreſted ſo as to give an allowance to his way of living, he will take

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it quite away, Baniſh that and God Almighty out of the World, and *ſet up Iniquity by a Law*. And nothing can be more pleaſing and agreeable to the Arrogance of ſuch Men than this way of Proceeding: It gratifies an inſolent and haughty Spirit prodigiouſly, to do things out of the common Road; to pretend to be *Adept* in a Philoſophy that is as much *above* the reſt of Mankind's Notions, as 'tis *Contradictory* to it: to aſſume to himſelf a Power of ſeeing much farther into things than other Folk, and to penetrate into the deepeſt receſſes of Nature. (*a*) He would paſs for one of Nature's Cabinet Councellors, a Boſome Favourite that knows all the ſecret Springs of Action, and the firſt remote Cauſes of all Things. He pleaſes himſelf mightily to have diſcovered with what Ridiculous Bugbears the Generality of Mankind are awed and frighted; he can now look down (*b*) with a Scornful Pity on the poor groveling Vulgar, the Unthinking Mobb below, that are poorly enſlaved and terrified by the Fear of a God, and of *Ills to come they know not when nor where*: He deſpiſes ſuch dull Biggots as will be impoſed upon by Prieſts, and that will ſuperſtitiouſly abſtain from the Enjoyment of preſent Pleaſure, on account of ſuch idle Tales as the Comminations of Religion. And as he deſpiſes thoſe that are *not Wicked*, ſo he upbraids thoſe *that are ſo*, with inconſiſtency with their Principles and Profeſſion, and for doing the *ſame things that he doth*, when they have nothing to bear them out: And thus he doubly gratifies his Pride, by juſtifying himſelf, and condemning and

(*a*) Vid. Jul. Caſ. Vanini Amphitheatr. in Titulo & Epiſt. Dedicator.

(*b*) *Deſpicere unde queas alios, paſſimq; videre*
Errare, atq; viam palantes quærere vitæ. Lucr. lib. 2.

and triumphing over others. Nay, the very Mistakes and Errours of such a Man, we are told, appear laudable and great to him, and he can please himself at last, with saying, *That he hath not Erred like a Fool, but* Secundum Verbum. *Vid.* Oracles of Reason, *p.* 92. When Men have a while enured themselves to talk at this rate, and to blow themselves up with such lofty Conceits and Fancies, they grow by degrees more and more opinionated, and do dote more and more on their own dear Notions; and finding by this means quiet and ease in the Practice of their Sins, they at last degenerate so far as firmly to believe the Truth of what they perhaps at first advanced and talk'd only from a Spirit of Contradiction; and become so stupid and blind, as, like great Liars, to believe their own Figments and Inventions (*a*). To such any Extravagant and Inconsistent Hypothesis, so it do but clash with Sacred Scripture, shall be no less than a real Demonstration; a Bold and daring Falsity shall pass for undoubted Truth; and a Prophane Jest, or a Scurrilous Reflection on the Character or Person of one in Holy Orders, shall be a sufficient Refutation of the plainest Demonstration he can bring against their Principles and Practices. For it is most certain, that though a Proud Man always think himself in the right, and arrogate to himself an Exemption from the common Frailties and Errours of Mankind; yet there is no body so frequently deceived and mistaken, as he; for he doth so overestimate all his Faculties and Endowments, and is so much enamoured of, and Trusts so much to his own Quickness and Penetration, that he usually Imagines

(*a*) Vid. *Great is* Diana *of the* Ephesians.

Imagines his Great Genius able to Maſter any thing without the ſervile fatigue of Pains and Study: and therefore he will never give himſelf Time ſeriouſly to examine into things, he ſcorns and hates the Drudgery of deeply revolving and comparing the *Idæas* of things in his Mind, but raſhly proceeds to Judgment and Determination on a very Tranſient and Superficial View: And there will he ſtick, be the Reſolution he is come to never ſo abſurd and Unaccountable; for he is as much above confeſſing an Errour in Judgment, as he is of Repenting of a Fault in Practice. And indeed, as the abſurd and ridiculous Paradoxes which Atheiſtical Writers maintain, ſhew their ſhallow inſight into things, and their Precipitancy in forming a Determination about them; ſo the Pride and Haughtineſs with which they deliver them, abundantly demonſtrates the True Spirit of ſuch Authors, and the Real Ground both of their Embracing and Maintaining their Opinions. *Plato* deſcribes the Atheiſts of his Age, to be a Proud, Inſolent, and Haughty ſort of Men, the Ground of whoſe Opinion was, he ſaith, ἀμαθεια μαλα χαλεπη, in reality, a *very miſchievous Ignorance*; though to the conceited Venders and Embracers of it Δοκεσα ειναι μεγιστη φρονησις, και σοφωτατη παντων λογων. It appeared to be the *greateſt Wiſdom*, and the *Wiſeſt of all Opinions*. *Lactantius* tells us in his Diſcourſe, *De Ira Dei*, p. 729. *Oxon.* that the true Reaſon why *Diagoras Melius* and *Theodorus*, two of the Ancient Atheiſts denied a Deity was, *That they might gain the Glory of being the Authors of ſome new Opinion, contradictory to the common Notions of Mankind.* And of the former of theſe,

theſe, *Diagoras*, *Sextus Empiricus* acquaints us, That becauſe a certain perjured Perſon, *who had wrong'd him, lived unpuniſhed by the Gods, he was ſo enraged at it, that he undertook to maintain there were no Gods at all.* Lib. Adr. Mathem. Edit. *Genev.* 1621.

The like Pride and Arrogance *Lactantius* tells us he found in the two great Writers that appeared againſt Chriſtianity, in his time, in *Bithynia.* The former of theſe, who, 'tis probable, was the famous *Porphyry*, called himſelf *Antiſtes Philoſophiæ*, the Chief or Prince of Philoſophers; and ſaith *Lactantius*, *Neſcio utrum Superbius an Importunius, pretended to correct the blind Errors of Mankind, and to guide Men into the True Way; He could not bear, that Unskilful and Innocent Perſons ſhould be enſlaved by the Cheats of, and become a Prey to, Crafty and Deſigning Men.* Lib. de Juſtit. p. 420, 421. *Oxon.*

With the like Aſſurance do the Modern Writers of this kind expreſs themſelves: And though they have in reality very little or nothing New, but only the Arguments of the Ancients a little varied and embelliſhed, (as I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve hereafter more at large,) yet they all ſet up for new Lights, and mighty Diſcoverers of the Secrets of Nature and Philoſophy; and all of them aſſume the Glory of firſt leading Men into the way of Truth, and delivering them out of the dark mazes of Vulgar Errors. This was the pretence of *Vanini*, who was burnt for Atheiſm at *Tholouſe*, *A. D.* 1619. *whoſe Mind*, he ſays, *grew more and more ſtrong,*

healthful and robuſt, as he exerciſed it in ſearching out the Secrets of that Supreme Philoſophy, which is wholly unknown to the common and ordinary Rank of Philoſophers: And this, he ſaith, *will ſoon be diſcovered, by the peruſal of his* Phyſico-Magicum, *which was now to ſee the Light. Vid.* Vanini Amphitheatr. in Epiſt. Dedicat.

Animus tamen in ſuprema & vulgo Philoſophantibus incognitæ Philoſophiæ Arcanis inveſtigandis validior factus & robuſtior; ut Phyſico-Magicum noſtrum, quod mox ex umbrâ in lucem prodibit pellegens, æqua poſteritas facilè eſt Judicatura.

After the ſame manner do *Machiavel, Spinoza, Hobbs, Blount*, and all the late Atheiſtical Writers, deliver themſelves; Inſtances of which, I think, I need not ſtay to give, ſince 'tis conſpicuous through the whole courſe of their Writings, and, no doubt, taken notice of by every Reader; only of the firſt of theſe, *viz. Machiavel*, I cannot but take notice, that *Vanini* himſelf ſaith, that 'twas his *Pride* and Covetouſneſs that made him deny the Truth of the Miracles recorded in Sacred Scripture. *Amphitheatr.* p. 51. Edit. *Lugduni*, 1615.

And as the *Writings*, ſo the *Diſcourſes* of theſe Gentlemen do equally diſcover this Pride and Vanity: for they do uſually deliver themſelves with ſuch a ſcornful and contemptuous Air, when they either endeavour to eſtabliſh their *own*, or to overthrow their *Adverſaries* Arguments, as ſufficiently ſhews the Propriety and Truth of the Pſalmiſt's Obſervation here, that 'tis *through the pride of his countenance, that the wicked will not ſeek after God.* The LXXII. indeed render it, κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ· *Through the*

the abundance of his wrath: and therein they are followed by the vulgar Latin. As if the Wicked were angry againſt God, and enraged at his Preſidency over Humane Affairs: as if they fretted under, and quarelled at the Severity of his Laws and Government, and ſcorned to apply themſelves to him by Prayer, and to ſubmit to him by Obedience. But though this may be a good ſence of the words; and though, I doubt not, a ſtubborn Frowardneſs and Perverſeneſs of our Wills againſt the Will of God, may be a frequent cauſe and ground of Infidelity: yet our *Engliſh* Tranſlation appears to me to be much better warranted from the *Hebrew*; for there it is properly, *through the Elevation of his Noſe or Face.* Which, truly, is very emphatical, and expreſſes ſuch a proud and ſcornful geſture of Face, as is the natural Indication of the Internal Haughtineſs of a Man's Mind; or as the *Targum*, on this place, render it, *of the arrogance of his Spirit.* Such a Turn and Air of Countenance as argues a proud contempt of all the reſt of Mankind, who trot on in the common road, believe and worſhip a God, and poorly ſubmit to be governed by his Laws and Precepts.

And thus having diſpatched my Two firſt Particulars, and ſhewed, That *Wickedneſs* and *Pride* are two great Cauſes of Infidelity and Atheiſm; I ſhould now proceed to ſpeak to the Third thing obſervable in my Text, *viz.*

III. The great Charge which the Pſalmiſt brings againſt the wicked Perſon here mentioned, *That he will not ſeek after God; neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

But this I muſt leave for my next Diſcourſe, and ſhall now Conclude with a word or two by way of Application.

Since the Caſe ſtands thus, That *Wickedneſs* in general, and *Pride* in particular, do ſo naturally lead to *Infidelity* and *Atheiſm*; and that 'tis hardly poſſible to imagine a Man can entertain ſuch an Opinion without them: Let every one then, that hath any Inclination or Temptation that way, ſeriouſly examine his own Mind, whether he be not prejudiced towards it by ſome *vitious Deſires* and *Affections*; whether he doth not heartily *wiſh* that there were no God nor Religion; whether he hath not, by his paſt Actions, really loaded himſelf with *guilt*, and therefore is diſturbed in his Mind with the apprehenſion, that the Divine Puniſhment will overtake him, and light upon him, for his Sins: Let him ſearch diligently whether he hath not recourſe to Infidelity, as to an *Opiate* in this caſe, to *allay* the Pains of his Conſcience, and to *compoſe* the Diſorder of his guilty Mind, and to gain, as it were, an *Inſenſibility* in Sinning. For if the caſe be thus, 'tis plain, he is not free, and at liberty, to make a juſt Judgment of the Truth of Things; he is already a Party, and much more enclined to one ſide of the Queſtion than to the other; and conſequently, he will pitch on that as Truth, which he would have to be ſo. But this is certainly a very partial way of proceeding, and ſuch as no wiſe Man would uſe in a matter of ſo very great moment, to engage one's ſelf raſhly in a Determination, before a thorough and careful Examination of the Evidence on both ſides: This is to look on things

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in a falſe Light, through coloured Glaſſes, through Diſeaſed and Icterical Eyes; and then to believe them to be *in reality*, what our depraved and prejudicate Apprehenſions make them.

The Enemies to Religion ſay, That the Preachers of it are not to be minded; the Arguments they bring are all *forced* and *ſtrained*, becauſe 'tis their Trade, and they get Money by it; and their Craft obliges them to cry out, *Great is* Diana *of the Epheſians!* I hope therefore this being ſo *Precarious* and *Partial* a way of Proceeding, to ſubſcribe to Religion by Implicit Faith, and to take it up upon truſt from thoſe, whoſe Intereſt (they ſay) it is to propagate it in the World: I hope, I ſay, that Men will not act ſo on the other hand, and embrace Atheiſm and Infidelity on the ſame *Precarious Grounds*. I hope all ſuch Perſons can clearly approve themſelves to be *truly Virtuous and Moral* in their Inclinations and Practices; and are ſure that they have no ſtrong Inclinations to ſuch Actions as the World calls *Vicious*. For if they have, and do take real Pleaſure in the Practice of Wickedneſs, 'tis plain that they muſt be Prejudiced and Bigotted to their Luſts and Humours; they cannot be *Free-thinkers* in the Caſe; the Cloggs of ill *Cuſtom*, and a looſe Education bear them down, and they cannot ſhake them off. Their preſent Intereſt influences and governs their Belief, and enſlaves and Tyrannizes over their Reaſon.

Let them conſider impartially the Arguments for Infidelity, and they will find *them* all *forced* and *ſtrained Paradoxes*, Invented by *Sceptical* and *Canting Philo-*

Philoſophers, a *Crafty* and *Deſigning* ſort of Men, who ſet up Atheiſm *becauſe they Get by it*, and whoſe *Intereſt* it is that there ſhould be no God and Religion.

Let not therefore Men be ſo ſtupid and blind as to talk of Prejudices on the ſide of Religion, and never perceive that there are any at all on that of Infidelity. If they ſcorn to take up Religion on truſt, without examining into its Grounds and Reaſons; for their Own ſakes let them be as Cautious and Inquiſitive on the other hand, and not run Hood-winked into Eternal Deſtruction, by ſubſcribing to Atheiſm in haſt, and without that previous Conſideration and Regard, which ſo great and important an Affair requires: For if they will but ſtrip themſelves of thoſe Prejudices which ariſe from their Vices, and avoid being impetuouſly born down by their depraved Inclination; they will ſoon perceive that the Grounds and Principles of Infidelity are abundantly too precarious to afford them any thing like a *Demonſtrative aſſurance* of the Falſity of Religion: *Without which*, ſurely no Man of Senſe, and that can think at all, will ever run the hazard of Damnation.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*, *February* the 7th. 169⅞.

BEING

The Second of the LECTURE for that Year, Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A. and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,

Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the *King's-Head* in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1698.

PSAL. x. 4.

The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, will not ſeek after God; neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN theſe words, I have, in a former Diſcourſe, taken notice of theſe Three Particulars:

I. The General Character or Qualifications of the Perſon here mentioned, which is, *That he is a Wicked Man.*

II. The Particular Kind of Wickedneſs, or Origin from whence the Spirit of Atheiſm and Irreligion doth chiefly proceed, and that is Pride; *The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance*, &c.

III. The great Charge which the Pſalmiſt brings againſt the Perſon here ſpoken of in my Text, *viz.* Wilful Atheiſm and Infidelity; *He will not ſeek after God, neither is God in all his Thoughts.*

The Two firſt of theſe I have already diſpatch'd, and therefore ſhall now proceed to diſcourſe on my Third Head, *viz.*

The great Charge here brought againſt this Wicked Perſon, *That he will not ſeek after God; neither is God in all his Thoughts:* or, as it is in the Margin, with good grounds (as I have before obſerved) from the Hebrew, *All his Thoughts are, There is no God.*

Which appears to me to imply a wilful and malicious ſlighting and contemning of God, and his Laws, and an endeavour to baniſh the very Thoughts of his Exiſtence out of their Minds. And under this Head, I ſhall make it my buſineſs to enumerate all the pretended Arguments and Objections which I have met with, and are of any weight, againſt the Being of a God, in general; and then endeavour to ſhew how Weak and Inconcluſive they are, and how miſerable a Support they will prove for Atheiſm and Infidelity.

But firſt it will be neceſſary, briefly to clear up one Point, and to obviate one Objection that may be made againſt this very Attempt of mine, of Refuting and Anſwering the Atheiſts Arguments and Objections.

It will, I doubt not, be ſaid, That there is not now, nor ever perhaps was in the World, any ſuch Perſon as a *Speculative Atheiſt*, or one that believes, there is no God. It is ſaid, with great aſſurance, by ſome, That the Ancient Atheiſts were only ſuch as declared againſt the Plurality of Gods, and the Idolatry and Superſtition of the Heathen Worſhip. And we are told by one, very lately, (*a*) *That he hath travelled many Countries, and could never meet with any Atheiſts*, (*which are few, if any*;) *and all the Noiſe and Clamour*, ſaith he, *is againſt Caſtles in the Air.*

(*a*) Two *Eſſays* from *Oxford*, in the *Apology*.

To which I Anſwer, That nothing can be more plain and clear, than that both Ancient and Modern Writers do give us an account of ſuch Perſons as were known and reputed Atheiſts, by thoſe that were Contemporary with them, and did well underſtand their Principles and Tenets. I need not inſiſt on Proofs from

from any of the Ancient Christian Writers; for 'tis sufficient, that *Plato*, *Diogenes Laertius*, *Plutarch*, *Cicero*, and many others, do acquaint us, that such kind of Men there have been in the World. Tho' I shall particularly produce the Testimony of two Authors, one ancient, and the other, 'tis probable, now living, to prove this Point; and these are, *Sextus Empiricus*, and he that wrote the *Thoughts on the Comet that appeared in the Year* 1680. *Sextus* is express, (*a*) That *Diagoras Melius*, *Prodicus Chius*, *Euemerus*, *Critias Athenienses*, *Theodorus*, and many others, were absolute Atheists, and denied that there were any Gods at all. And the *French* Gentleman (*b*) saith the same of most of those mentioned by *Sextus*, and other Ancient Writers; and to the number, adds some others of a Modern date: And Mr. *Blount* saith, (*c*) that the *Epicureans* constantly affirmed, there were no Gods. Now the Evidence of these Authors will, I hope, be allowed, because they seem Well-wishers to the Cause of Infidelity themselves. To these I might add, were it necessary, That *Vaninus* himself tells us frequently of Atheists that he met with, (and no one will doubt but that he knew where to find one at any time,) and he calls *Machiavel*, expressly, *Atheorum facilè Princeps* (*d*.) But indeed, this Assertion of these Gentlemen, That there is no such thing as an *Atheist* in the World, is like most other things that they advance, Uncertain and Precarious, and often contradicted by what at other times they deliver: for though they are sometimes, and in some Companies, for Reasons that are very obvious, unwilling to take the Title of *Atheist* on themselves or their Party; yet they are often ready

(*a*) *Adv. Mathem.* p 317, 318, &c. *Genevæ*, 1621.

(*b*) *Pensees diverses à l'Occasion de la Comete*, Tom. 2. §. clxxiv. p. 531.

(*c*) *Anim. Mund.* p. 96.

(*d*) *Amphitheatr. D. Providentiæ*, p. 35.

ready enough to beſtow it on others; and when it is ſubſervient to their purpoſe, will inſinuate, (*a*) That the greateſt Lights and Teachers of the Church believe as little of Religion as themſelves. But I ſay alſo,

(*a*) Vid. *Blount's* Tranſlation of the *Life* of *Apollonius*, p. 84.

2. That 'tis one thing to disbelieve the Exiſtence of a God, and another to declare ſo to the World. And it doth not at all follow, that a Man is not an Atheiſt, becauſe he doth not openly profeſs himſelf to be ſo, at all times, and in all Companies. There are no Writers ſo inſincere as theſe kind of Gentlemen; they are very cautious and tender how they expoſe themſelves to the juſt Puniſhment of the Law. *Vaninus* himſelf, though he did at laſt ſuffer Death *madly*, for his Infidelity, (as one (*b*) ſaith of him, that died as madly himſelf,) yet is he very cautious and careful, in his Writings, how he renders himſelf obnoxious to the Cenſure of the *Inquiſition*; and he declares, (*c*) That he will ſubmit all things to the Judgment of the *Roman Church*. So a Gentleman of our own Nation, though he endeavours, as effectually as 'tis poſſible, under-hand, to ridicule and undermine Religion; yet he would fain appear to the World to be a good Chriſtian, and one that hath a mighty Veneration for God and his Laws: but, in the mean time, 'tis very eaſie to diſcover his true Principles and Deſign; for he declares, (*d*) That he thinks it much *ſafer to believe as the Church believes, and to pin his Faith always on my Lord of* Canterbury*'s Sleeve*, as he ſaith he will do, and *ſubſcribe* to any ridiculous Legend, rather than incurr the Cenſure of the *Popiſh Clergy*; as he baſely calls the Miniſters of this moſt Excellent *Proteſtant* Church: for the ſame laudable Reaſons alſo, he forbears communicating, what he doth

(*b*) *Anima Mundi*, in the *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 54.

(*c*) *Amphitheatr.* p. 151, 334. *Lugdun.* 1615.

(*d*) *Blount's* Tranſlation of *Philoſtratus's Life* of *Apollonius*, in the Preface.

doth, or ought to think Truth, to Mankind, (as he tells us in many places.) Now if this be the caſe with theſe *Men of Honour*, that they dare not ſpeak their Minds, nor diſcover their true Sentiments plainly to the World; we muſt by no means conclude over-haſtily of their *Orthodoxy*, by what they ſay in Diſcourſe at *ſome times*, or publiſh in Print at *others*: but, in ſhort, if they ſet up ſuch a Notion of a God, as is eſſentially inconſiſtent with the *Idea* that all Mankind have of ſuch a Being; if they make him either a Neceſſary Agent, or a Blind, Idle and Unactive One; if they diveſt him of his Providence, or cramp him in his Attributes, as thoſe that call themſelves *Deiſts* generally do: in a word, if they make him ſuch an Impotent and Careleſs Being, as either cannot or will not govern the World, give Laws to his People, vindicate his own Honour, and puniſh and reward Men according to their Actions: 'Tis plain, I ſay, that though in *words* they may profeſs to believe and honour a God, yet in *reality* they deny him, and have no manner of Notion of his true Nature and Perfections. But 'tis not the *Name* only, nor the empty Sound of the word *Deity*, but the *Thing*, that is wanting in the World; 'tis the true Knowledge and Belief of *this* only, that can clear a Man from the imputation of Atheiſm: If he be not right in this Point, *i. e.* if he have not ſuch a belief of God, as implies in it a knowledge of the Perfections of his Nature, he may call himſelf by as *fine* and *faſhionable* Names as he pleaſes, and pretend to *Deiſm* and *Natural Religion*; but in reality he is an *Atheiſt*, and ſo ought to be eſteemed by all Mankind; for as one ſaith, (*a*) that knew very well what an Atheiſt was, *Such are Atheiſts*,

(*a*) *Blount's Anima Mundi, in Oracles of Reaſon, Pref.*

Atheiſts, as deny God's Providence; or who reſtrain it in ſome particulars, and exclude it in reference to others, as well as thoſe who directly deny the Exiſtence of a Deity: And *Vaninus* (*b*) calls *Tully* Atheiſt, on this very account; and in another place, he ſaith, (*c*) That to deny a Providence, is the ſame thing as to deny a God.

(*b*) *Amphitheatr.* p. 124.

(*c*) Pag. 152.

This therefore being returned in Anſwer to the Objection, That there is no ſuch thing as an Atheiſt: Let us now go about to examine and conſider the Arguments and Objections that are uſually brought by Atheiſtical Men, againſt the Being of a God. And theſe, one would think, ſhould be exceeding weighty ones, and no leſs than *direct Demonſtrations*; for if they are not ſuch ſtrenuous Proofs as are impoſſible to be refuted, I'm ſure the Atheiſt ought to paſs for the moſt ſenſeleſs and ſtupid of all Mankind. He ſlights and deſpiſes that ineſtimable Offer of being Happy for ever; he runs the riſque of being eternally Miſerable; he bids open defiance to the Laws of God and Man; and he oppoſes his own Opinion and Judgment, to the ſober and conſiderate Sentiments of the judicious part of Mankind, in all Ages of the World. Now ſurely, in ſuch a caſe, he ought to be very ſure that he cannot be miſtaken; and to be as demonſtratively certain, as of the truth of any *Theorem* in *Euclid*, that there is no God, no Moral Good nor Evil, no Revealed Religion, nor any Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments. But can any Man have the face to pretend to this? Will not the common ſenſe of all Mankind pronounce this impoſſible? and that a Demonſtration of the *Non-Exiſtence* of theſe things, is not to be obtained? Can any one be directly aſſured, that there

there is not ſo much as a *Poſſibility* that theſe things ſhould be true? And if ſo, then 'tis plain, that for any thing he can directly prove to the contrary, the Atheiſt may be in the wrong, and conſequently be Eternally damned and miſerable. Now would any one, that can think at all, run this Dreadful Hazard? much leſs ſure, one that pretends to be a Man of *Penetration* and *Judgment*, and to Philoſophize above the Vulgar: And yet this every Atheiſt doth; and that too on no other Grounds but the Strength of ſome trifling Objections againſt, and ſeeming Abſurdities in, the Notion of a God, and Religion, which the Extravagant Wit of wicked Men hath invented and coined to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe that reprove them, to ſtifle and bear down the Stings of Conſcience, and to gain ſome pretence to Reaſon and Principles in their Impious Proceedings. But ſurely theſe Perſons muſt know well enough, that 'tis a very eaſie thing to ſtart Objections againſt the moſt plain and obvious Truths; They know alſo, that in other Caſes, themſelves think it very unreaſonable to disbelieve the truth of a Thing, *only* becauſe they can't readily anſwer all the Objections a witty Man may bring againſt it, and becauſe they cannot ſolve all the *Phænomena* of it. Now, why ſhould not they proceed ſo in Matters of Religion? They know that all the great Truths of it, have been demonſtrated over and over, by thoſe Learned and Excellent Perſons which have written in the Defence of it; Nay, they know too, that moſt of their Objections have been already refuted and anſwered, and that they adhere to a Cauſe that hath been frequently baffled. They know the weight and importance of

the Subject, and that if Religion ſhould at laſt prove to be true, they muſt be for ever Miſerable: All this, I ſay, they very well know; and therefore it looks ſtrangely like an Infatuation upon them, that they will run this Dreadful Hazard only on the Strength of a few *Objections*, and a bare ſurmiſe only that there is no ſuch thing as a God or Religion. Theſe *Objections* are their only Hold and Pretence that they can ſtick to and abide by, and *what* and how Great they are, I ſhall now proceed to Examine. Theſe I ſhall take in their Natural Order: And,

1. Conſider ſuch Objections as are brought againſt the Being of a God in General.

2. Such as are alledged againſt his Attributes and Perfections.

3. Such as are advanced againſt the Truth and Authority of revealed Religion. The Groundleſsneſs and Inconcluſiveneſs of all which I ſhall endeavour as clearly as I can to Demonſtrate.

And Firſt, I ſhall conſider and refute the Objections and Arguments that are brought againſt the Being of God in General; and theſe are (as far as I can find) all reducible to theſe two Heads. It is ſaid,

1. That we can have no Idea of God.

2. That the Notion of a Deity owes its Original, either to the fooliſh Fears of ſome Men, or the Crafty Deſigns of others.

I ſhall at this Time handle the *former* of theſe, and Refute the Objections that are brought againſt the Exiſtence of a Deity, from our not being able (as they ſay) to have any *Idea* or *Notion* of him. The Atheiſt alledges, That whatſoever is Unconceiveable

ceiveable is really nothing at all: that we can have no Idea, or poſſible Notion of any thing that is not ſome how or other an Object of our Senſes; for *all Knowledge is Senſe:* and we can only judge of the Exiſtence of things by its Evidence and Teſtimony. Now God is by Divines ſaid to be *Incomprehenſible*, *Infinite*, and *Inviſible*; *i. e.* Something that 'tis impoſſible to know any thing about; that is every where, and yet no where; that ſees every thing, and yet no body can ſee him; nor can we perceive any thing of him by any other of our Senſes: We cannot tell what to make of ſuch an Account as this of a God; we can have no Phantaſm, Idea or Conception of any ſuch Thing; and therefore we juſtly conclude, There is no ſuch Being in Nature. And as for that precarious Notion of a God, that is ſo much talk'd of in the World, 'tis nothing but a meer *Phantome* or *Mormo* deviſed and ſet up by Politick and Deſigning Men to keep the Rabble in awe, and to ſcare ſuch Fools as are afraid of their own Shadows. The ſeveral Points of this Objection, I ſhall ſingly conſider; and, *Leviathan*, p. 208.

As to the Firſt Part of it, That what we cannot attain any *Idea* of; or, That what is *abſolutely Unconceiveable*, is really *nothing* at all; perhaps it may be true, taking it in the moſt ſtrict and proper ſence of the words; for though I am not of *Protagoras*'s Mind, that Man is πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον· yet as I think, that That which is *abſolutely Unconceivable in its own Nature*, is not poſſible to be Exiſtent; ſo *what is abſolutely ſo to us*, we can know nothing at all of, nor reaſon, nor argue about it; ſince there is no doing of this but from our Ideas. But I cannot

ſee how this will be advantageous at all to the Cauſe of Infidelity: For there is neither any one that aſſerts, nor is the Atheiſt able to prove, that That Being which we call God, is *abſolutely Unconceiveable.* There is a vaſt difference between a thing's being *Unconceivable*, and *Incomprehenſible*; between our having *no Idea at all* of a thing, and our having an *Imperfect* one; and between our knowing *Nothing at all* of a Being, and our comprehending all the *Poſſible Perfections* and Excellencies of ſuch a Being. We readily grant that the Immenſe Nature of God is incomprehenſible to our finite Underſtandings; but we don't ſay 'tis abſolutely *Unconceivable*, and that we can know nothing at all about it. The common Notion (*c*) which all Mankind have of a God, is a ſufficient Refutation of this Part of the Objection, as it is alſo a very good Proof of the real Exiſtence of a Deity; for if there were no ſuch Being, 'tis impoſſible to conceive how any Idea of him could ever have come into any one's Mind, as I ſhall hereafter more largely prove.

(*c*) *Sextus Empiricus* allows, that there is κοινὴ ἔννοια, a common Notion or Idea of a God, even when he diſputes againſt him. *Adv. Math.* p. 333.

2. There is implied in this Objection, That we can have no *poſſible Idea*, *nor Notion of the Exiſtence of any thing that is not the Object of our Senſes*: And from hence theſe Sublime Thinkers argue againſt the Exiſtence of a Deity, and conclude there is no God, becauſe they cannot *ſee* him, and becauſe he is not perceivable by any of our Bodily Senſes. Thus one of our Modern Atheiſtical Writers aſſerts, *That the only Evidence we can have of the Exiſtence of any thing, is from Senſe.* And in another place, (*a*) *Whatſoever we can conceive* (ſaith he) *hath been perceived firſt by Senſe, either at once or in Parts, and a Man can have*

(*a*) *Hob's Leviath.* p. 11.

no

no Thought representing any thing not subject to Sense. And he defines *Sense* to be *Original Knowledge.* Which is but the Reverse of what *Protagoras,* long ago determin'd: for *Plato,* in his *Theætetus,* tells us, That he defined all *Knowledge* to be *Sense.* Now, is not this admirable Philosophy? and worthy of those that pretend to a sublimer pitch of Knowledge than the Vulgar? There is no *Knowledge,* say they, but *Sense.* If so, then, as *Protagoras* saith, *all Sense must be Knowledge*; and consequently, he that sees, hears, smells or feels any thing, must immediately know all that is to be known about it: By seeing the Letters of any Language, or hearing the Words pronounced, a Man or a Beast must needs understand all the Sense and Meaning of it; and the Philosophick Nature of all Bodies will be perfectly comprehended, as soon as ever they once come within the reach of our Senses. This is, indeed, a good easie method of attaining Learning; and perhaps very suitable to the Genius of these Gentlemen! But I cannot account from this Notion, how *they* come to have so much more Penetration and Knowledge than their Neighbours. Are their Eyes and Ears, Noses and Feeling, so much more accurate than those of the Vulgar? Yes, doubtless, these are truly *Men of Sense!* their Lyncean Eyes can penetrate Mill-stones, and the least silent whisper of Nature moves the Intelligent Drum of their tender Ears; nothing escapes their Knowledge, but what is undiscoverable by the nicest Sense, and can only be *comprehended by Reason. Reason!* an *Ignis Fatuus of the Mind,* whose uncertain Direction they scorn to follow, while this *Light of Nature, Sense,* can be their Guide. Nor will it avail them to alledge here,

that

that when they ſay, we have no Knowledge but what we have from our Senſes; they mean only, that all our Knowledge comes in that way, and not by *Innate Idea's*: for the Author I have mentioned above, is expreſs, that *we can have no thought of any thing not ſubject to Senſe*; that *the only Knowledge we have of the Exiſtence of all things, is from Senſe*; and that *Senſe is Original Knowledge*. And if ſo, there can be no ſuch thing as comparing or diſtinguiſhing of *Idea's* in our Mind; but the ſimple *Idea's* of Senſible Objects being impreſſed upon our Brain, muſt needs convey to us, by that means, all the Knowledge that we can ever obtain about them, and that as ſoon too as ever the Objects are perceived. But than this, nothing can be more falſe and abſurd: for 'tis plain, that by our bare Senſations of Objects, we know nothing at all of their Natures. Our Mind, indeed, by theſe Senſations, is vigorouſly excited to enquire further about them: but this we could by no means do, if *Senſe* were the *higheſt Faculty* and Power in our Natures, and we were quite devoid of a *Reaſoning and Thinking Mind*. This, *Democritus* of old was very well aware of, (however he comes now to be deſerted by the Modern Atheiſtick Writers,) for ſaith he, (*a*) *There is in us two kinds of Knowledges; one Dark and Obſcure, which is by the Senſes; the other Genuine and Proper, which is by the Mind.*

(*a*) Γνώμης δ' δύο εἰσὶν ἰδέαι· ἡ μὲν γνησίη, ἡ δὲ σκοτίη, &c. Vid. *Sext. Empiric.* adv. *Mathem.* p. 164.

And nothing can be more plain, than that we have certain Knowledge of the Exiſtence of many things, which never were, nor perhaps can poſſibly be the Objects of our Bodily Senſes. *Protagoras* himſelf ſaith,

(*b*) *Sext. Emp.* (*b*) Ἄθρει περὶ σκοπῶν μήτις πρὸ ἀμυήτων ἐπαχθὴς εἶτι ἢ ἔστι, εἰ ἐδὲν ἄλλο οἰόμενοι, εἶ, ἢ ὃ ἂν δύνωνται ἀπρὶξ τοῖν

τῶν χερσὶν λαβέσθαι, πᾶν τὸ ἀόρατον ἐκ ἀποδεχόμενοι, ὡς ἐν οὐσίας μέρει: *Take heed that none of the Uninitiated hear you, who are such as think nothing to Exist, but what they can lay hold of with their Hands; and who will not allow any thing that is Invisible, to have a place among Beings.*

The Epicurean Atheist must needs grant the Existence of his *Atoms*, and his *Empty Space*; when yet they must be *both* acknowledged to be no way sensible. Those that hold a Soul or Life in Matter, Plastically diffused through all Parts of the Universe, by which all things are actuated and regulated, cannot deny but this Power is Invisible, and no way the Object of Bodily Sense. Nay, those that assert a Corporeal Deity, and say, that nothing can possibly exist but Body; must needs own, that something of this Deity, as his *Wisdom, Power* and *Understanding*, which is certainly the Chief and most Noble of all his Essence, can no ways fall under our Bodily Senses. Let him that asserts, That what is not the Object of Sense, is really nothing at all; let him tell me, if he ever saw that *Power, Faculty, Understanding* or *Mind*, by which he is enabled to make such a Determination? That there is such a Power or Mind in him, 'tis impossible for him to doubt or deny: for that very *doubting* and *denying*, will *refute* him; and must convince him, that there must be something in him of a *Real Nature*, that can thus Think and Consider, Doubt and Deny; and at last conclude, That there is *nothing Actually Existent, but what is Sensible:* For what is *really* and *absolutely* Nothing, can never Think, Consider, Doubt or Determine.

Now let him call this Mind or Soul of his what he

he pleaſes, I do not here conſider its Nature; let it be a Subſtance diſtinct from Matter, be it a happy Combination of Animal Spirits; or the brisk Agitation of any fine and ſubtile Parts of Matter, 'tis all one to our preſent purpoſe, it certainly *Exiſts*, or *is*; and yet is it by no means an Object of Senſe. For Animal Spirits, Motion, and the fineſt and ſubtileſt Parts of Matter are no more ſenſible to us *now*, than an Incorporeal Subſtance is. And as he is thus aſſured that there is ſomething real in himſelf, which yet is the Object of none of his Senſes; ſo he cannot but conclude the ſame of other Men that are round about him, that they alſo have a Soul or Mind of the ſame Nature: for he muſt know and be ſatisfied, that *they* can *think*, *reaſon*, *doubt*, *affirm*, *deny* and *determine*, as well as himſelf. Now, if he muſt grant that there are on this Account many things exiſtent in the World, which do no way fall under the cogniſance of our Senſes, it will be ſtrangely ſenſeleſs and ridiculous to argue againſt the Being of a God from *His* not being ſo; and to deny that there is *any ſuch thing*, becauſe he cannot ſee *Him* with his Bodily Eyes, becauſe he cannot feel *Him* with his Hands, and hear the Sound of his Voice actually ſpeaking from Heaven. For the Exiſtence of that Divine Being *whom no Eye hath ſeen nor can ſee*, is as plainly demonſtrable from Reaſon and Nature, from his viſible Works in the World, and from the inward Sentiments of our unprejudiced Minds, as the Being of our *Own* and *Others Minds* is from the power of thinking and reaſoning that we find in our ſelves and them.

3. But

3. But *Thirdly*, 'tis objected further, (*a*) *That we cannot have any Idea of God*, and conſequently may conclude, There is no ſuch Being; becauſe he is, by Divines, ſaid to be *Incomprehenſible* and *Infinite*: (That is, ſay they) ſomething which we can know nothing at all about; for we cannot have any *Phantaſm* or *Conception* of any ſuch thing. Thus ſaith that famous Atheiſtical Writer, *Whatever we know, we learn from our Phantaſms; but there is no Phantaſm of* Infinite, *and therefore no Knowledge or Conception of it. No Man*, ſaith he, *can have in his mind an Image of Infinite Power or Time: And there is no Conception or Idea of that which we call* Infinite. In another place, he aſſerts, (*c*) *That the Attributes of God ſignifie Nothing true nor falſe, nor any Opinion of our Brain; and are not ſufficient Premiſes to inferr Truth, or convince Falſhood. And the Name of God* (he ſaith) *is uſed, not to make us Conceive him, but that we may Honour him.* And he elſewhere ſaith, (*d*) *That thoſe that venture to diſcourſe Philoſophically of the Nature of God, or to reaſon of his Nature from his Attributes, loſing their Underſtanding in the very firſt attempt, fall from one Inconvenience to another, without end or number, and do only diſcover their Aſtoniſhment and Ruſticity.* This Bold Writer doth in another place tell us, (*e*) That *God muſt not be ſaid to be Finite*; and ſo being neither *Finite* nor *Infinite*, he muſt be nothing at all: Which is the very ſame *Dilemma* that the Sceptick, *Sextus Empiricus*, (*f*) makes uſe of againſt a Deity. Another Modern Author of the ſame ſtamp, tells us, That he that calls any thing *Infinite*,

(*a*) *Hobb's Leviathan*, p. 51.

Περιεχῶσιν δ' ἀπειρίαν ὅτι γε μὴ μεταβάλλουσαν ἀμήχανόν ἐστι γνῶσιν ἀνθρωπίνῳ εὑρεῖν. *Sext. Empir.* adv. *Math.* p. 17. And a little after, he aſſerts, that Ἄπειρόν ἐστιν εἴδησις.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 11, 190.

(*d*) *Leviath.* Par. iv. c. 46. p. 374.

(*e*) Pag. 190.

(*f*) Adv. *Mathem.* p. 333.

doth but, *Rei quam non capit attribuere nomen quod non Intelligit*; "Give an unintelligible Name to a "thing which he doth not underſtand." All which agrees exactly with what *Sextus* alſo ſaith, in many places of his Book; and whom theſe Gentlemen follow pretty cloſely in moſt things, without taking any notice at all of him.

Now to this, I return; That as 'tis very fooliſh and precarious, to deny the Exiſtence of a God, becauſe He is not an Object of our Bodily Senſes; ſo, to conclude, that there is no ſuch Being, from our not being able perfectly to comprehend Him, and to have a true and adequate Idea of him, is equally abſurd and unaccountable. For at this rate, we may ſoon come to deny the Exiſtence of moſt things in Nature, ſince there are very many of which we do not adequately comprehend the Nature of, and know all that is to be known about them. There is ἀκατάληπτόν τι, *ſomething Incomprehenſible* in the Nature of all things. Are there not a thouſand Beings, which we are ſure are truly and actually exiſtent in Nature, the manner of whoſe Operation and Action we cannot comprehend, and whoſe *Phænomena* we cannot Philoſophically explain? Let any of theſe Penetrating Gentlemen try their Skill at *Gravity*, *Light*, *Sound*, *Magnetiſm* and *Electricity*, and oblige the World with ſuch an adequate Account of *any one* of them, as ſhall make all impartial and curious Men acquieſce in it as ſatisfactory. Let him clearly ſhew us how his own *Senſations* are made; how the *Circulation of the Blood firſt begins*, and *continues its Vital Tour* round his Body; how *Peſtilential* and *Contagious* Diſeaſes *firſt invade* and are *propagated*; how

ſeveral

ſeveral Medicines, that may be properly enough call'd *Specifick's*, operate; and particularly, how the *Cortex Peruvianus* cures an Intermitting Fever: In a word, let him tell us how his *own Body* (ſetting aſide Accidents) *decays, grows old*, and *dies*, when the ſame *Digeſtions* and *Aſſimulations* are made to Day, as were Yeſterday, and there is no apparent defect in the Nutriment of any one part of it. He that can account for theſe, and many other ſuch like things, which are obvious to every one's daily Obſervation, will certainly approve himſelf to be a Man of very curious and acute Thought, and of very deep Inſight into Nature: and when he hath fully convinced me, that he throughly *comprehends* the Nature of but theſe few things, I will allow that he hath ſome ground to disbelieve the Exiſtence of whatever appears to him Incomprehenſible. But if a Perſon will candidly own, as he that hath any *Knowledge* and *Modeſty* muſt do, That there are many things in the Hiſtory of Nature, of which he cannot meet with a ſatisfactory Solution and Explication; he hath certainly no manner of reaſon to disbelieve the Exiſtence of a God, on the ſame account; and to ſay, There is no ſuch Thing, becauſe his Nature is Incomprehenſible to our finite and imperfect Capacities. *We cannot, by ſearching, find out God, nor diſcover the Almighty unto perfection*, Job xi. 7.

But again; There is a vaſt difference between *Apprehending* and *Comprehending* of a thing; between knowing a thing really to be, and knowing all that is poſſible to be known about that thing. We cannot indeed perfectly comprehend the Nature of God, becauſe we have ſhallow, limited, finite and imper-

fect Capacities and Faculties; and the Deity contains in himſelf all poſſible Perfection. Every one muſt grant, that 'tis impoſſible the *leſſer* ſhould contain and comprehend the *greater*, eſpecially too when the Extent and Fulneſs of one, Infinitely exceeds the Capacity of the other. From hence therefore to inferr that we can have no *Idea* nor *Knowledge at all* of God, is very abſurd and incongruous. 'Tis a ſtrange Method of Arguing, that I can know nothing at all of a thing, becauſe I can't know every particular that belongs to it; and he would deſervedly be eſteemed a Madman, that ſhould deny that there is any ſuch thing as the Sun, becauſe he cannot tell how many Miles he is in Diameter, how far he is from us, and which way he comes by a ſupply of Matter to continue his enlivening Fire and Heat. When ſome great and advantageous Revolution is brought about in any Nation; when the Publick Good is ſecured, the Laws and Liberties preſerved, and Confuſion, Bloodſhed, and Miſery of all Kinds, prevented, by the wiſe and deep Council and Conduct of Him, or Thoſe that are at the Helm of Affairs: Would it not be groſs Stupidity, for a Man to aſſert, That all this came about by Chance, and that there was no Wiſdom nor Conduct, that ſo opportunely managed all things; only becauſe he cannot penetrate into all the ſecret Steps and Methods of it, and ſee all the hidden Springs, by which it was moved regularly on to its intended Perfection? There are many things whoſe Exiſtence 'twould be ridiculous to doubt of, whoſe Nature and Qualities we are very far from being able perfectly to Comprehend and Explain. And amongſt the reſt, there is nothing but

our

our own Exiſtence, that we can be more aſſured of, than that there is a God. For as to all Objects of Senſe, we may, as Monſieur *Des Cartes* ſhews, have ſome reaſon to doubt of their actual Exiſtence without us, till we are firſt ſatisfied that our Senſes do not deceive us: Till we know this, for any thing we can demonſtratively prove to the contrary, all ſenſible Objects may be meer Phantaſms and Deluſions, and nothing but the internal Configurations of our own Brains, and the reſult of Imagination and Fancy. But when once we are aſſured that there is a God, who is perfectly Knowing, Wiſe, and Good, we ſhall diſcover that He can be no Deceiver; we ſhall find that 'tis not ſuitable to the Idea we have of Him, that He ſhould delude and cheat us with falſe Appearances; and conſequently we may well conclude, that he hath appointed our Senſes to be proper Judges of their own Objects, and that thoſe Things are actually exiſting without us, whoſe Idea's we ſo plainly perceive in our ſelves, and which we truly judge to be ſo.

And if we will impartially conſult our own Thoughts, and reaſon clearly from thoſe Idea's that we have within us; I think, we may moſt demonſtratively be aſſured of the Exiſtence of a God, and that He is ſuch a moſt Perfect or Infinite Being, as the Sacred Scriptures and Divines deſcribe Him to be. I will allow that the greateſt Certainty that we can have of the Exiſtence of any thing, is of our own Being; of which, as I have already ſaid, no one can poſſibly doubt: for whatſoever can *Think reaſon, doubt, will*, and *determine*, muſt needs be *Something*, and have a *true and real Being*. And becauſe we find by this means, that there is certainly

ſomething

ſomething actually exiſting; it will plainly follow, that ſomething or other muſt always have been *ſo*: for if ever there was a time when there was *Nothing*, there never could have been any thing at all: for abſolute *Nothing* could never have *done*, or *produced any thing*. Something therefore ('tis plain) muſt have been always, or eternally exiſting, and which never could have had any beginning. For if it ever had any beginning, tho' never ſo many Thouſands of Millions of Ages ago, it muſt have then began from meer Nothing, which 'tis impoſſible for any Man to conceive. Now, if we conſider our ſelves, or any things elſe that are round about us in the world; we ſhall plainly find, that neither *we* nor *they*, can be this thing that always was exiſtent, and which we have diſcovered muſt have been without beginning; for we know well enough, that it was but a little while ago when we began to be, and that 'tis but a ſhort ſpace before we ſhall die, and ceaſe to be in this World any more. Beſides, we find in our ſelves, and diſcover in things without us, ſuch Defects, Limitations and Imperfections, as ſufficiently muſt convince us, that neither we nor they can be Independent Beings, nor indeed the Cauſe of one another's Exiſtence. We muſt therefore in our Thoughts have recourſe to ſome *firſt Cauſe* or *Origin*, from whence all things do proceed: And that there muſt be ſome *firſt Cauſe*, or ſome *Being*, which produced both our ſelves and the things that are round about us in the World, we cannot but be aſſured of, for we know, nothing can cauſe, or make it ſelf to be; and we ſee that we cannot make or produce each other; and we perceive that none of our Forms or

Modes

Modes of Existence are Indestructible and Eternal; but that all things are continually flitting and changing: some improving and increasing, while others are decreasing and dying. The *common Matter*, indeed, of all Bodies will remain, and we do not find it to be perishable, as their forms are; But then, *this* we may easily know cannot be the first Cause of all other Things; since we have no Idea of its being an *Active*, *Intelligent*, *Wise*, and *Powerful Being*, as that must be; but the Notion we have of it is, that it is ὕλη πρὸς ἔχουσα, *purely Passive*, *and obsequiously Capable of all variety of Forms and Motions*; as I shall hereafter more largely shew. If we farther carefully consider of this Being, that we have thus found must have eternally been or existed; we shall find also, that it must for ever continue *to be for the time to come*; for we cannot imagine, how a Being that hath Eternally existed for the time past, should ever terminate or cease to be for the time to come; since there is nothing in its *self*, or in any thing *without it*, that can possibly be the Cause of its Destruction. Such a Being therefore will be properly Eternal, and necessarily Self-existent, without Beginning or End, or any Possibility of Dying or Ceasing to be. Such a Being also, must on this Account, be the *Creator*, *Author*, and *Cause* of all things: because, nothing can be the Cause of it self; and therefore they must either be Eternal and Necessarily Self existent, as we are assured they are not; or else derived from, and produced by this Eternal and Infinite Being. And as the Beings themselves are derived from, and produced by this Eternal and Self existent Being, so must all their *Perfections* and *Qualifications* too: for they

they are indeed the moſt Noble Things in their Natures. *Knowledge* therefore, and *Wiſdom*, *Thought* and *Reaſoning*, and all the excellent Powers and Faculties that are found in any Creatures, muſt come from the ſame Power that produced thoſe Beings and Natures in which they are inherent. And if theſe Excellencies and Perfections are derived from this Neceſſarily exiſtent Being, they muſt certainly be in Him in the greateſt Perfection: for if they were not in Him, they could not be derived from him; ſince 'tis unconceivable that any thing can give or communicate to another, either what it hath not it ſelf, or a greater degree of any thing than it is Maſter of. This Eternal and Self-exiſtent Being therefore muſt have in it, and that in the utmoſt Perfection, all the Excellencies that we admire and value in any other things. It muſt have the Power of doing all things that are poſſible to be done, and therefore be *Almighty*; it muſt *know* all things that are poſſible to be known, and therefore be *Omniſcient:* In a word, it muſt be *All-Wiſe* and *Good*, *Juſt* and *True*, *Merciful* and *Gracious*, and contain in it all poſſible Excellencies and Perfections. Now this may very well paſs for a Deſcription of the Deity; and 'tis ſuch an One as is very Intelligible and Plain to the meaneſt Capacity that can but think at all. And it gives us ſuch an Idea of God, as we ſee is eaſily attainable by an obvious and familiar Chain of Conſequences, and which puts our Minds not at all on the wrack to conceive. As for the word *Infinite*, which is often applied to God, and which theſe Gentlemen quarrel ſo much at, and of which they affirm, that it is *impoſſible to have any Conception*

Conception or Idea; I ſay, that it is groundleſsly and precariouſly aſſerted: and that nothing but the wilful Darkneſs and Confuſion which they have brought upon their own Minds can make it appear Unintelligible. For as the Excellent Dr. *Cudworth* hath proved the *Idea* that we have of *Infinite*, is the ſame with that which we have of *Perfection*. And therefore when we ſay, that God is Infinite in Power, Wiſdom or Goodneſs, we mean by it, that He is moſt perfectly or compleatly ſo; and that he wants nothing which is neceſſary to render Him moſt Perfect, and Excellent in that Reſpect of which we ſpeak of Him. Now a Being that any way is Deficient or Imperfect, and that hath not all the poſſible Excellencies that are to be had, is Finite, and that in the ſame proportion as it is defective. Thus, for Inſtance, thoſe Beings which endure but for a time, which had a Beginning, and will have an end, are finite or imperfect, as to their exiſtence: But GOD, who *is*, *was*, and *is to come*, who is and will be from *Everlaſting* to *Everlaſting*, He is properly ſaid to be *Infinite* (*a*) or *Perfect*, as to Exiſtence or Duration. For there is no Reſtriction, Limitation or Imperfection in His Nature, in this reſpect, as there is in that of all Creatures whatever. A Being whoſe Power extends to but a few things, is very imperfect or finite in Power; and if there be any Poſſible thing that it cannot do, 'tis ſtill ſo far imperfect in Power. But a Being that can do all things that are not contradictory to his Nature, or all poſſible things, is properly ſaid to be *Infinite* or *Perfect* in Power, or *Almighty*; ſo a Being that knows

(*a*) Τὸ δ' ἄϊδιον ἀχρόνητον καθ' ὁτιοῦν, ἐκ ἔχον ἀρχὴν ἢ ἔχον δ' ἀρχὴν, ἀπεραντὸν ὄν. *Sext. Empir.* adv. *Math.* pag. 150.

all things poſſible to be known, is Infinite or Perfect in Knowledge: and the like of any other Attributes or Perfections: In all, the Compariſon or Proportion is the ſame. A Being that wants no degree of Excellency or Perfection is God; *Infinite in Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Goodneſs* and *Truth.* But if a Being want any one, or any degree or proportion of Theſe Things, it is Finite and Imperfect, and that in the ſame degree or Proportion. Now, where is the *Inconceivableneſs, Confuſion, Abſurdity,* and *Nonſence* of all This? is it not as eaſie to conceive or apprehend that a Being may have in his Nature all poſſible Perfection, as it is to have an Idea of one that is Imperfect and Deficient? for how comes the Idea of Imperfection into our Mind? how come we to know that a Thing is Finite, Defective and Limited, unleſs we have alſo an Idea or Notion of Infinity or Perfection? how can we know what is wanting in any Being, unleſs we have an Idea of it, that it is in ſome other Being? Moſt certain therefore it is, that we may have as true and clear an Idea of the Exiſtence of a God, as of any thing in Nature: (*b*) and in Fact it is moſt notoriouſly true, that a clear and diſtinct Notion that there is ſuch a Being, hath and doth ſtill appear in the Minds of all Mankind; and it is impreſſed there, I doubt not, by the *peculiar Care* of that Divine and Merciful Being Himſelf.

(*b*) *Vid.* Mr. *Lock's Eſſay of Underſtanding.* P. IV. Ch. X.

And therefore thoſe that aſſert, that we have not, nor can have any Notion or Idea of a God, nor of his Attributes and Perfections, and that on *that* Account deny his Exiſtence; diſcover ſuch wretched Ignorance as well as Obſtinacy, that they are really a Diſgrace

Diſgrace to Humane Nature. For pretending to be *over-Wiſe*, they *become Fools*, they *are vain in their Imaginations*, and *their fooliſh heart is darkened*; Their vicious Inclinations have debauched their Reaſon and Underſtanding: And *though God be not far from every one of us*, ſince *in Him we live, move, and have our being*; yet their Wickedneſs and Pride is ſuch, That *they will not ſeek after God, neither is God in all their Thoughts*. From which wilful Blindneſs and Stupidity, may the God of Truth deliver them, by the gracious Illuminations of his Bleſſed Spirit; To whom, with our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, be all Honour and Glory, *&c.*

F I N I S.

Books printed for Rich. Wilkin *at the* King's-Head *in St.* Paul's Church-yard.

MR. *Harris*'s Sermon, Preach'd at the *Cathedral-Church* of St. *Paul, January* the 3d. 169⅞. being the Firſt of the Lecture for that Year, Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſquire.

—— His Remarks on ſome late Papers relating to the Univerſal Deluge, and to the Natural Hiſtory of the Earth. In *Octavo.*

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The *Notion* of a *GOD*,

Neither from

FEAR nor POLICY.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,
March the 7th. 169⅞.

BEING

The Third of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the
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SERMON

PSALM x. 4.

The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance, will not ſeek after God: neither is God in all his Thoughts.

IN my laſt Diſcourſe on theſe words, I came to conſider the *Third* Particular I had before obſerved in them; which was, The great Charge the Pſalmiſt brings againſt the Wicked and Proud Perſon here ſpoken of, *viz. Wilful Atheiſm and Infidelity. He will not ſeek after God: and all his thoughts are, There is no God.* Under which I propoſed to Conſider and Refute the Atheiſt's Objections, againſt the Being of a God in general. And theſe I found might be reduced to theſe Two Heads:

I. That we can have no Idea of God.

II. That the Notion of Him, which is about in the World, owes its Original to the fooliſh Fears and Ignorance of ſome Men, and to the crafty Deſigns of others.

The former of theſe I have already refuted, and ſhewed that it is Groundleſs and Precarious in all its Parts.

I ſhall now therefore conſider the Second Objection againſt the Being of a God in general, *viz.* That the Notion of a Deity, which is ſo generally found among Mankind, owes its Original to the

foolish Fears and Ignorance of some Men, and to the designing and crafty Figments of others.

And here I shall first give you the Sense of these kind of Writers on this Point: And then endeavour to shew you, how very weak and trivial their Arguments are, and how very far short they come of Disproving the Existence of a Deity.

And first I shall give you the full sense of this Objection, from the words of those that bring it; beginning with the Modern Writers, who, as you will find by and by, have little or nothing new, *but like Carriers Horses, follow one another in a Track, and because the first went wrong, all the rest will succeed him in the same Errour; not considering, that he who comes behind, may take an advantage to avoid that Pit, which those that went before, are fallen into.* (as it is in the words of the Translator of (*a*) *Philostratus.*)

(*a*) *Blount's Life of Apollon.* p. 19.

But here it must be premised, That since these kind of Men do frequently disguise their true meaning; *It is not the bare Words only, but the Scope of a Writer, that giveth the true Light by which any Writing is to be interpreted,* (as Mr. *Hobbs* (*b*) very well observes:) yet this must be said for both him and the other Modern Atheistick Writers, That their Disguise is so very thin and superficial, that any one may easily see through it, and discover their true Meaning and Design. Nothing can be clearer, than that 'tis the great scope of the Author of *Great is Diana of the Ephesians,* to persuade the World, That the first Original of all Religion, was from Craft and Imposture, and that it was cultivated and carried on by the Cunning and Avarice of the Priests. And in his *Anima Mundi,* pag. 13, 14. he tells us, That

(*b*) *Leviath.* p. 338.

Super-

Superſtition (by which theſe kind of Writers always mean *Religion* in general) *did certainly proceed from ſome Crafty and Deſigning Perſon,* who obſerved what were the Inclinations of Mankind, and ſo adapted his Fictions accordingly: *He pretended to have ſome extraordinary way revealed to him, from an Inviſible Power, whereby he was able to inſtruct the People*; and to put them into a way of being happy in a Future State. And in another place, he ſaith, *(a) That Mankind being ill-natured, and unapt to oblige others without Reward, as alſo judging of God Almighty by themſelves, did at firſt conceive the Gods to be like their Eaſtern Princes, before whom no Man might come empty-handed; and thus came the Original of Sacrifices:* And this Inſtitution, he ſaith, was improved by the crafty Sacerdotal Order, into all that coſtly and extravagant Superſtition that did afterwards ſo abound in the World. Now in this paſſage, 'tis plain, that he makes all the Jewiſh Religion to be nothing but Prieſt-craft and Impoſture; tho' on wretched poor grounds, as I ſhall hereafter ſufficiently make appear. And his Opinion of the Chriſtian Religion, may eaſily be gueſſed, by what he delivers, *Anim. Mund.* pag. 124. viz. *That moſt Chriſtian Churches, like the Musk-melon from the Dunghill, were raiſed from the filthy Corruption and Superſtition of Paganiſm.* And in another place, he ſaith, *(b) That he will engage to make appear, That a Temporal Intereſt was the great Machine on which all Humane Actions ever moved*; (he means, in the Eſtabliſhing of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Religions;) *and that the common Pretence of Piety and Religion, was but like Grace before a Meal:* *i. e.* according to him, nothing but a meer cuſtomary piece

(a) *Life of Apollon.* p. 30.

(b) *Oracles of Reaſon,* p. 158.

piece of Folly that ſignifies nothing at all, and which he frequently ridicules and expoſes (*c*).

(*c*) *Blount's* Life of *Apollon.* in the Preface, and p. 24.

Now all this, though not in plain and expreſs words, yet in the moſt obvious ſenſe and meaning, is equally applicable to the Notion of a God; and no doubt was ſo intended by the Author. And, indeed, take away Religion and the Notion of a God muſt of courſe follow: For 'tis impoſſible to think that if there be a God, he ſhould not expect Veneration and Worſhip from thoſe Creatures of his, that he hath rendred capable of doing it; which therefore *is their reaſonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1.

(*a*) Cauſa, à qua Superſtitio oritur, conſervatur & fovetur, metus eſt. *Tract. Theol. Polit. in Præf.*

After the ſame manner doth *Spinoza* declare himſelf as to the Origin of Religion; which he alſo calls by the Name of Superſtition. (*a*) He tells us, That *the true Cauſe from whence Superſtition took its riſe, is preſerved and maintained, is Fear.* (*b*) *That if all things would but ſucceed according to Mens Minds, they would never be enſlaved by Superſtition: But becauſe they are often in great ſtreights, and ſo put to it, that no Counſel or Help will be beneficial to them, they are toſſed and bandied about between Hope and Fear, and at laſt have their Mind ſo debilitated, that they are prone to believe any thing.* (*c*) *But that in reality all thoſe things which have been the Objects of Mens vain Religious Worſhip, are nothing but the dreadful Phantaſms and mad Figments of a ſorrowful and timorous Mind.* (*d*) *And the*

(*b*) Si Homines res omnes ſuas certo conſilio regere poſſent, vel ſi fortuna ipſis proſpera ſemper foret; nulla ſuperſtitione tenerentur: ſed quoniam eò ſæpè anguſtiarum rediguntur ut conſilium nullum ad ferre queant, inter ſpem metumq; miſere fluctuant, ideo animum ut plurimum, ad quidvis credendum proniſſimum habent. *Ibid.*

(*c*) Ea omnia quæ Homines unquam vanâ Religione coluerunt, nihil præter Phantaſmata, animiq; triſtis & timidi fuiſſe deliria. *Ibid.*

(*d*) Ex hâc itaq; Superſtitionis Cauſâ (ſc. metu) clarè ſequitur omnes homines naturâ ſuperſtitioni eſſe obnoxios: quicquid dicant alii; qui putant hoc inde oriri, quod omnes mortales confuſam quandam Numinis Idæam habent. *Ibid.*

reaſon

reaſon (he ſaith) *why all Men are thus ſubject by Nature to Superſtition, is only from Fear; and not as ſome have fanſied, from any confuſed Idea of a God, which they will have to be impreſſed on all Mankind.*

The Author of the *Leviathan*, ſpeaks yet a little plainer as to this Point; (*e*) *Ignorant Men* (ſaith he) *feign to themſelves ſeveral kinds of Inviſible Powers, ſtand in awe of their own Imaginations, in time of Diſtreſs invoke them, in time of Succeſs give them thanks, making the Creatures of their own fancy Gods. This is the Natural Seed of Religion, which Men taking notice of, have formed into Laws*, &c. (*e*) *Leviath.* P. 51.

And he tells us in another place, (*f*) That *Fear of Power inviſible feigned by the Mind, or imagined from Tales publickly allowed is Religion, not allowed, is Superſtition.* So that according to Mr. *Hobbs*, Religion and Superſtition differ only in this, that the latter is a Lye and a Cheat ſtanding only on the Authority of Private Men, whereas the former is ſupported by the Power of the Government. In theſe Four Things, ſaith he, elſewhere, (*a*) *conſiſts the Natural Seed of Religion*, viz. *Ignorance of Second Cauſes, Opinion of Ghoſts, Devotion toward what Men Fear, and taking things caſual for Prognoſticks.* Theſe are the Accounts which our Modern Atheiſtical Writers give of the Origin of Religion, and the Notion of a God among Men. And this they, with great aſſurance, put off as their own new Invention; without being ſo juſt as to mention any of the Ancients, from whom they have borrowed every Article of it. That trite Paſſage every Body knows *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*; and *Lucretius* mentions *Fear* and *the Ignorance of Second Cauſes*, as (*f*) *Leviath.* P. 26. 51. (*a*) *Leviath.* P. 54.

that

that which gave the firſt riſe to the Notion of a God: For, ſaith he, (*b*) *When Men with fearful Minds behold the things in the Earth and Heavens, they become abject and depreſſed under the fear of the Gods; whoſe Empire Ignorance of Cauſes ſets up in the World: for when Men cannot ſee any natural Reaſon for any Effect, they ſtrait fanſie 'tis the Product of ſome Divine Power.* The very ſame thing he ſaith alſo in another place, (*c*) where he attributes likewiſe the Notion of Ghoſts, and conſequently of the Gods interfering with the Affairs of the World, to Mens not being able to diſtinguiſh Dreams from Real Appearances. *Tully* tells us, That *there were ſome in his time*, and no doubt long before, *who attributed the Opinion and Belief of the Gods to have been feigned by Wiſe Men for the good of the Commonwealth.* (*d*) And *Plato* acquaints us, (*e*) *That the ancient Atheiſts did affirm, that the Gods were not by Nature, but by Art and Laws only, and ſo were different in different places, according as the different humour of the Law givers chanced to determine the Matter.* *Sextus Empiricus* ſaith, That *there were at firſt ſome Intelligent and Prudent Men* (*f*) *who conſider'd what would be*

(*b*) *Cætera, quæ fieri in Terris Cœloq; tuentur Mortales, pavidis cùm pendent mentibu' ſæpè Efficiunt Animos humiles formidine Divùm, Depreſſoſque premunt ad Terram, propterea quòd Ignorantia Cauſarum conferre Deorum Cogit ad Imperium Res, & concedere Regnum: Et Quorum operum cauſas nullâ ratione videre Poſſunt, hæc fieri Divino numine rentur.* Lib. 6. v. 49.

(*c*) Lib. 5. v. 1160. *Nunc quæ cauſa Deûm,* &c.

(*d*) Ii qui dixerunt totam de Diis immortalibus opinionem fictam eſſe ab hominibus ſapientibus Reipublicæ causâ.

(*e*) Θεὸς εἶναι πρῶτον ἔφασι τέχνῃ, καὶ φύσει ἀλλὰ πάντες νόμοις καὶ τέτες ἄλλες ἄλλοις ὅπῃ ἑκάς῾ συνομολόγησαν νομοθετέμενοι. *Plato* de Legib. lib. 10.

(*f*) — πρῶτας μὲν ἀνθρώπων περισάσας καὶ τὸ συμφέρον τῷ βίῳ σκεψαμένες πάντα σωφρόνως ὅλας ἀναπλάσαι τὸ θεῖόν τε καὶ θεῶν ὑπόνοιαν, καὶ τὸ θεῖον μὲν ἐν ἀϊδίῳ μακαριότητι δόξαν. Sext. Emp. adv. Math. p. 310.

be beneficial to Humane Life; and these first feigned the fabulous Notion of Gods, and caused that Suspicion that there is in Mens Minds about them. Afterwards he saith, That *heretofore Men lived wild and savage, and preyed upon one another like wild Beasts; till some Men being willing to prevent and repress Injuries and Rapine, invented Laws to punish those that did amiss: And then they feigned, that there were Gods also, who took cognizance of all Mens Actions, whether good or bad; that so no one might dare to commit any secret Wickedness, when he was by this means perswaded,*

Ἥερα ἐσαμῶσι, πάντη φοιτῶσιν ἐπ' αὖαν
Ἀνθρώπων, ὄφρεις τε καὶ εὐνομίας ἐφορῶντες,

That the Gods, tho' unseen by Men, did yet inspect into all Humane Actions, and take notice who did well, and who the contrary. *Sextus* also attributes the Rise of Mens Belief of a God, to their ignorance of Second Causes, (as I shewed you before that *Lucretius* doth:) for he makes *Democritus* speak thus, (*a*) *When Men of old saw strange and frightful things in the Air or Heavens, such as Thunder, Lightning, Thunderbolts, Eclipses of the Sun and Moon*, &c. not knowing the Natural Causes of them, but being terrified by them, *they strait imagined the Gods to be the Authors of them.* This therefore being proved to be the true sence of the Ancient Atheistical Writers, and from them copied by the Moderns, *viz.* That *Fear, Ignorance* and *Cunning* were the first Originals or Causes of the Notion and Belief of a *God.* Let us now fairly examine the Case, and see what ground there is for such an Assertion; and whether this can account for that Universal Notion of a Divine

(*a*) Ὁρῶντες τὰ ἐν τοῖς μετεώροις παθήματα οἱ παλαιοὶ ἧσσ ἀνθρώπων, καθάπερ βροντὰς καὶ ἀστραπὰς, καὶ κεραυνοὺς, ἡλίου τε καὶ σελήνης ἐκλείψεις ἐδεματεύοντο Θεοὺς οἰόμενοι τούτων αἰτίους.

and Omnipotent Being, which we find every where in the World. And,

1. I say, That the *Notion* of a GOD, could not come from *Fear*; for if it did, either this Fear must be universally inherent in all Mankind, or else peculiar only to some Dastardly and Low-spirited Mortals. If the former be asserted, 'tis a very convincing Argument, that there is a just ground for such a Fear; and that it hath something that is Real for its Object, that can thus affect all Men, after the same manner. And if it be so, that all Men are naturally subject to this Fear of a Deity; how could any one ever discover, that there was no real ground for this, in the nature of the thing? how came he himself exempted from this poorness of Spirit? And if he were not exempted from this terrible Passion, how came he to discover, that the Object of this Fear is all a Cheat, and nothing but a meer *Mormo* and Bugbear? 'Twas very lucky for him, that the rambling Atoms of his Constitution jumpt by chance into such a couragious and noble Frame and Temper! But pray who was this mighty Man? when and where did he live? what Ancient History gives us any Account of this happy Person, that laughed at *that* which all the World besides were afraid of? Let the Atheists give us but any Relation of him, that is Authentick, and it shall be allowed as the greatest thing they have ever yet advanced. But I suppose they will not say that this Fear is Universal; but that it only possesseth mean and abject Spirits, and never invades the *Great* and *Brave Soul*. Let us see whether this will do them any service. Now by *Brave* and *Great Souls*, who do they mean? Do they intend

tend by them, ſuch as have Power, Command and Empire over others? Nothing is more certain, than that Kings and Princes have been equally ſubject to theſe Fears of a God, and of Divine Puniſhment, with the meaneſt and moſt contemptible of their Subjects. And this (*a*) *Lucretius* himſelf owns, (as alſo that this Fear of a Deity is Univerſal) and we have Examples of it in the Hiſtories of all Ages and Parts of the World. But they will ſay, 'tis like, that by *Brave* and *Great Souls*, they don't mean Kings and Princes, but the Wiſe, Knowing, and Learned part of Mankind: Theſe were they that firſt diſcovered this Cheat, and who, finding its Advantage to Mankind, have ever ſince continued it and carried it on for the Publick Good. Theſe Cunning Men finding the Vulgar generally ſubject to diſmal Apprehenſions and Fears of they knew not what kind of Inviſible Powers, took advantage from thence to tell them of a God, and to form the product of their Fears into the Notion of a Deity. Now to this I ſay, That if theſe cunning Politicians found that there was a Fear, Dread and Apprehenſion of ſome Divine and Almighty Being, Univerſally impreſſed upon the Minds of Men, as no doubt but there is; this, I ſay, is a very convincing Argument that ſuch a Belief hath a good Foundation in the Nature of the thing, and conſequently hath Truth at the bottom. And therefore 'tis plain, that theſe

(*a*) *Præterea, cui non animus formidine Divûm*
Contrahitur? cui non conrepunt membra pavore
Fulminis horribili cum plagâ torrida tellus
Contremit, & magnum percurrunt murmura Cœlum?
Non Populi Genteſque tremunt? Regeſque ſuperbi
Conripiunt Divûm perculsâ membra timore
Ne quod ob admiſſum fœdè, dictumque ſuperbè
Pœnarum grave ſit ſolvendi tempus adactum?

Lucret. l. 5. *v.* 1217.

Men did not *Invent*, but *find* this Notion and Belief actually Exiſting, by a kind of *Anticipation* in the Hearts of all Mankind. And that they could not poſſibly invent it, had there been no Ground nor Reaſon for ſuch a Belief, I ſhall plainly prove by and by.

But again; That the Notion of a *God*, did not ariſe only from *Fear*, is plain from hence; That Mankind hath gotten an Idea of Him, that could never proceed only from *that Paſſion*. If *Fear* only were to make a *God*, it would compoſe him of nothing but black and terrible Idea's: it would repreſent Him to be πᾶν φθονερὸν καὶ ταραχῶδες, *all envious and ſpiteful*; a grim, angry and vindicative Being; one that delights in nothing but to exerciſe his Tyrannical Power and Cruelty upon Mankind: we ſhould then believe him to be ſuch a Power as the *Indians* do their *Evil God*, and we do the Devil; a miſchievous and bloody Deity, that is the Author of nothing but Evil and Miſery in the World: for theſe muſt be the dreadful Attributes of a Being which *Fear* only would create and ſet up in our Hearts.

But now, inſtead of this, we find a quite different Notion of God in the World. We juſtly believe Him to be a moſt Kind, Loving and Gracious Being, and *whoſe mercies are over all his works*. We are taught by the Scriptures, thoſe Sacred Volumes of his Will, to believe that He at firſt Created the World, and all things that are therein, to diſplay his Goodneſs and Kindneſs to his Creatures: That *he wills not, nor delights in the death of a ſinner*, nor in the evil and miſery of any thing; but that He hath by moſt admirable methods of Divine Love, provided for our

Happi-

Happineſs both here and hereafter. Now ſuch an Account as this of the Deity, could never take its Riſe from *Fear* only: And therefore ſince it cannot be denied but that we have ſuch a Notion of God, it muſt have ſome more Noble and Generous an Original. We find, indeed, in our ſelves a juſt Fear and Dread of Offending ſo Good and Gracious a God; and we believe it ſuitable to his Juſtice, to puniſh thoſe that will pertinaciouſly continue in a ſtate of Rebellion againſt Him, after having refuſed and ſlighted the repeated Overtures of his Mercy. But then we know very well, That the Notion we have of a Deity, is not occaſioned by, and derived from this *Fear*; but, on the contrary, this *Fear* from *it*: 'Tis the Natural Conſequence and Effect of the Belief and Knowledge of a God, but it cannot be the Cauſe and Original of it. For Fear alone can never diſpoſe the Mind of Man to imagine a Being that is infinitely Kind, Merciful and Gracious. The Atheiſt therefore muſt here take in *Hope* too, as well as *Fear*; as a joint Cauſe of his pretended Origin of the Belief of a God; and ſay, That Mankind came to imagine that there was ſome Powerful and Inviſible Being, which they *hoped* would do them as much good, as they were afraid it would do them hurt (*a*). But theſe two contrary Idea's, like Equal Quantities in an Equation with contrary Signs, will deſtroy one another, and conſequently the Remainder will be nothing. And therefore the Mind of Man muſt lay aſide ſuch an Idea of God, as ſoon as he hath well conſidered it, for it will ſignifie juſt nothing at all.

(*a*) *Vid.* Archbiſhop *Tillotſon's* Firſt Sermon, *p.* 47.

Another very good Argument, That the *Notion* of a *God*, did not take its firſt Original from *Fear* only, may be

be drawn from hence, That thoſe that do believe and know moſt of God, are the leaſt Subject to that ſervile Paſſion. If Fear only occaſioned Mens Notion and Belief of a God, the conſequence muſt be, that where the Notion of a Deity is moſt ſtrong and vivid, there Men muſt be moſt timorous and apprehenſive of Danger; there the greateſt diſtruſt, ſuſpicion, and anxious ſollicitouſneſs about the Events of Futurity would be always found. But this is ſo far from being true in Fact, that no one is ſo free from thoſe Melancholy and Dreadful Thoughts and Apprehenſions, as he that truly believes in, and Fears God. For he can find always in Him Almighty Defence and Protection; *he can caſt all his care on God who he knows careth for him:* When all the treacherous Comforts of this World leave him, and when nothing but a gloomy Scene of Affliction, Diſtreſs and Miſery preſents its ſelf here; yea, even when Heart it ſelf and Strength begin to fail, *God will be* (he knows) *the Strength of his Heart and his Portion for ever*; and even in the *vaſt Multitude of his Afflictions, God's Comforts will refreſh his Soul.*

But 'tis far otherwiſe with the miſerable Wretch that hath no Belief of, nor any Knowledge of God; if *he* fall into Affliction, Trouble, or Miſery, he hath nothing to ſupport him: He is the moſt abject and diſpirited of all Mankind, *his whole head is ſick, and his heart is faint, and his Spirit cannot ſuſtain his Infirmity*; for he hath not only no Power and Ability to bear the *preſent* load of Miſery, but he expects yet much worſe to *come*; and notwithſtanding all his former Incredulity and Bravery, he now, as the Devil himſelf doth, *believes and trembles.* And there-

therefore, though as *Plutarch* obſerves, Τέλος τῶ μὴ νομίζειν Θεὸς, μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *it be the chief Deſign of Atheiſm to give Men an Exemption from Fear*; yet 'tis a very fooliſh one, and falls very far ſhort of anſwering its End: for it deſerts and fails its Votaries in their greateſt Extremities and Neceſſities, and by depriving them of all *juſt* Grounds for *hope*, muſt needs expoſe them to the moſt diſmal Invaſions of *Fear*. And thus, I think, it is very plain, That the Notion of a God could not take its firſt Original from *Fear*. As to the Ignorance of Second Cauſes, which is ſometimes alledged as another Occaſion of the Notion of a Deity; the Modern Atheiſts do not much inſiſt upon it, and therefore I need not do ſo in its Refutation. I have ſhewed already whence they had it; and I think it ſufficient to obſerve here, that there are no Men ſo Ignorant of Second Cauſes, nor any that give ſo poor and trifling Accounts of the *Phænomena* of Nature as theſe Atheiſtical Philoſophers do. And therefore Ignorance ought rather to be reckoned among the Cauſes of *Atheiſm* and *Infidelity*, than of the Idea of God and Religion; for I am very well aſſured that a through inſight into the Works of Nature, and a ſerious Contemplation of that admirable Wiſdom, excellent Order, and that uſeful Aptitude and Relation that the ſeveral Parts of the World have to each other, muſt needs convince any one, that they are the Products of a Divine and Almighty Power. *The Inviſible things of God may be underſtood by the things that are made, and his Eternal Power and Godhead diſcovered by this means* (*a*); as hath been excellently demonſtrated by the learned Dr. *Cudworth*, Dr. *Bentley*, Mr. *Ray*, and many others.

(*a*) Rom. I. 20.

And

And these kind of Gentlemen have betrayed their shallow and superficial Knowledge of things, by nothing more, than by pretending to give an Account of the Original of the World, the Motion of the Heavenly Bodies, of Gravity, and several other *Phænomena* of Nature, without having recourse to a Deity; as I shall hereafter more particularly observe. But I now hasten to Refute that which they make their Great and most Common Objection against the Being of a God; And to shew,

2. That the Notion of a God did not, nor could not, arise from Cunning and Contrivance; and that it was not invented by any Crafty and Politick Person.

Though that it did do so, is the constant Assertion of these Gentlemen; and they do it with as much assurance, as if it were a Self-evident Proposition. In all Companies they will nauseously tire you with this Battology, over and over again, That *All Religion is a Cheat, and the greatest Cheat of all is Religion.* But this themselves have happily discovered; and therefore they Scorn to be imposed upon by Priest-craft; they will neither be *ridden* by Priests, nor *lead* by them; *they can go without Leading-strings*; *and won't be put to the Temporal Charge of a Spiritual Guide: and they have quitted the Thoughts of going to Heaven by the same means as they go to the Play-house,* (i.e.) *by giving Money to the Door-keepers.* As the Translator of *Philostratus* insolently expresses it. (*a*) Now after all this bold and repeated Exclamation against *Priest-Craft* and *Holy Shams*, &c. Would not one think that they had some *demonstrative* Ground, to prove that the Notion of God, and

(*a*) *Blount's* Life of *Apollon.* in the Preface.

and Religion is all a *Cheat* and *Impoſture?* Would not one ſuppoſe that they could name the very Perſon that firſt Invented this *Fourbe*; tell us when, and where he lived, and plainly prove by what means he came to impoſe ſo groſly on Mankind, and how they came to be ſuch Fools as to take it, and dully to ſubmit to it ever ſince? Nothing ſure, that is leſs than a *direct Demonſtration*, ought to protect a Man under ſo rude a Liberty as theſe Gentlemen take, of ridiculing all the Sacred Laws of God and Men. But have they any ſuch Proof ready? or have they ever yet produced it? No, nor is it poſſible they ever ſhould; as appears plainly from the Ancient Hiſtories of all Nations in the World. In no one of theſe do we ever find the leaſt mention made of any one that Invented the Notion of a God. 'Twas a Thing taken for Granted by all the Ancient Law-givers, that there was a God: This they never went about to prove; nor had they any need ſo to do, or to feign it, for they found it univerſally and naturally ſtamp'd upon the Minds of Mankind. This *Moſes* himſelf doth not ſo much as attempt to teach the *Jews*, as knowing very well that it was what they had a general Notion and Idea of before. And *Homer* ſpeaks every where of the Gods, as of Beings univerſally known and believed, and never goes about to prove their Exiſtence. The ſame thing appears in *Heſiod*, and in the Fragments that we have of all the Ancient Greek Poets. And though it be not true in Fact, yet 'tis a good Argument *ad Hominem* againſt the Atheiſts, that *Lucretius* pretends to tell you when Atheiſm began, and who was the firſt Bold Man that diſputed and denied the Being of a

God. This, he ſaith, was *Epicurus*. (*a*) But he cannot deny but that in ſo doing, *Epicurus* contradicted the common Sentiments of all Mankind, and broke through thoſe Fears and Obligations that the generality of Men were under to a Divine Power. But to Refute a little more Methodically this trite Objection. I ſay, that the Notion of a God could not derive its Original from the cunning Invention of any Politick Perſon, for theſe Reaſons:

(*a*) *Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra*
Eſt oculos auſus, primuſq; obſiſtere contra:
Quem nec fama Deûm, nec fulmina nec minitanti
Murmure compreſſit Cœlum.----Lib. 1. v. 67.

1. Becauſe the pretended Inventor himſelf could never poſſibly have come by ſuch a Notion, had there been no ſuch Being as a God. *Sextus Empiricus* obſerves very well, *That though* (*b*) *'tis pretended that Lawgivers and Politicians invented the Notion of a God; yet the Aſſerters of it are not aware of an Abſurdity that ariſes thence: for if it ſhould be asked, how they themſelves came by ſuch a Notion? they muſt be at a loſs; they will not ſay they had it from others, nor can they account how they came by it; and therefore it muſt have been from the beginning; and ſo all Men muſt have a Notion of God, though not all after the ſame way.* And, indeed, 'tis not poſſible to imagine that ſuch a Notion could ever have come into any one's Head, had there been no ſuch Being as a Deity. Were he an abſolute Non-entity, and really Nothing at all, 'tis unconceivable how any one could ever attain an Idea of God, or have coined

(*b*) ---φασὶν ὅτι νομοθέται τινὲς ἐνεποίησαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὴν περὶ Θεῶν δόξαν, μὴ εἰδότες ὅτι τὸ ἀρχὴν ἔσχεν ἄτοπον αὐτῆς περιμένει ζητήσαντι ἂν τινα, πόθεν δὲ οἱ νομοθέται, μηδένα πρόσθεν παραδόντα αὐτοῖς Θεὸν, ἦλθον εἰς ὑπόνοιαν Θεῶν; εἶτα πάντες μὲν ἀνθρωποι τούτων ἔχουσιν ἔννοιαν, οὐχ ὡσαύτως δέ.

Adv. Math. p. 314.

coined any word that ſhould ſo have expreſſed that Idea, as to render it intelligible to any one elſe. The Mind of Man cannot invent, or make any new ſimple Idea or Cogitation; it cannot poſſibly make a Poſitive Conception of that which is really nothing at all. Which way ſoever we come by our Idea's, we cannot have one of what is abſolutely a Non-entity; for what is abſolutely Nothing, can neither come into us by *our Senſes*, nor be *innate* in our Minds. And therefore if there were no God, we could never have had any Idea of Him; nor could any one ever poſſibly invent, or frame ſuch a Notion in his Mind. I know the *compounding*, *ampliating* and *feigning Power* of the Mind will here be alledged; and it will be ſaid that we may by that means frame Notions of things which perhaps did never, nor ever will Exiſt: Thus we may gain the Notion of a Flying Horſe, of a Creature, half a Man and half a Horſe, a Man of a Thouſand Foot high, &c. and therefore ſay they, (*a*) why might not the Mind of Man, by this compounding and ampliating Power, feign as well the Notion of a Deity? To which I anſwer, That this Power in our Minds doth not, nor cannot extend ſo far. All that we can do by it, is to connect together two or more poſſible and conſiſtent Idea's, or to Ampliate or Enlarge any one or more of them, in point of *Time*, *Extent*, &c. Thus, as was before ſaid, by connecting the Idea's of Wings and a Horſe, or of a Horſe and a Man, we may feign a *Pegaſus* or a *Centaure*; and I can imagine either of theſe Creatures, or any other, to live Five Thouſand times as long, or to be Fifty

(*a*) *Sext. Empiric.* Adv. Mathem. p. 316, 317.

thouſand times as big, as is uſual. But all this is ſtill ſhort of what 'tis brought for, and will give no account at all of the Invention of the Idea of a God. For ſuppoſe the Mind would endeavour to amplifie the Idea of a Man into that of God, which is the Way *Sextus Empiricus* ſays Men might and did come by the Notion of a Deity. (*b*) Firſt, he ſaith, the Mind can give him Eternity of Duration: But how came it by that Idea of Eternity? was that Idea previous to the Invention of a Deity? and had Mankind a clear Conception of it? if they had, the Notion of God could not be then invented, for *one* of his chiefeſt Attributes was known before. But I ſuppoſe they will ſay that the Notion of Eternity was gained by *Ampliating* the Idea of Duration or Time beyond the common and ordinary Term: And thus by imagining a Man to live a Thouſand or Ten Thouſand Years, I may come to frame the Notion of a Being that ſhould always exiſt. But that is a groſs Miſtake; for a Being that ſhould endure Ten Thouſand, or Ten Millions of Years, is not therefore exempt from dying at laſt, any more than one that endures but Ten Minutes. Had I not in my Mind *before* a clear Idea of Eternity, I could no more by this Ampliating Power gain a Notion of an Eternal Being, than I could believe my ſelf to be Eternal; for every thing about me would contradict that Notion; and 'tis very ſtrange that I ſhould come to believe any Being could have an Eternal Duration from conſidering of things that are all periſhable and mortal.

(*b*) *Ubi ſupra.*

That

That which leads Men into this miſtake, is, I ſuppoſe this: We have all of us a Notion of a Being, Perfect or Eternal, as to his Duration, becauſe there is ſuch a Being in Reality: And therefore, whenever we go about to conſider of Time, or of the Period or Term of the Duration of a Being, we can ampliate it ſo, as to ſuppoſe it ſhall never ceaſe to be, but have its Being ſtill continued on without end: That is, we can connect the Idea that we have of Eternity with a Being, and ſo render it Eternal. But this could never be done, if there were *no Idea* of Eternity at all, if there were nothing Eternal, if there were no God. The caſe is the ſame as to all the other *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. We have clear Idea's and Notions of them in our Minds; and therefore we can talk about them, and be underſtood: becauſe there are real Idea's that anſwer to thoſe words that we uſe; and ſomething really exiſting, that anſwers to thoſe Idea's. But were there no ſuch Being, nor any thing Real in Nature, to deduce our Idea's from, were there no God, 'tis impoſſible there could be any ſuch Idea's at all.

But however, this Aſſertion, That the Mind of Man was able to Invent the Notion of a Deity, and communicate it to the World, is a moſt flat and palpable Contradiction to what the Atheiſt at other times urges, and that too, as founded on Principles that he is very fond of. In my laſt Diſcourſe, I ſhewed you, That he objected againſt the Being of a God, from our not being able to have any Idea of Him; and this he endeavours to ſupport, by aſſerting alſo, That we have *no Knowledge but Senſe*, and *that all our Conceptions are Paſſive*,

Paſſive. Now both theſe are abſolutely inconſiſtent with the Original that he is now attributing to the Notion of a God. For if it be true, as he ſaith it is, That we can have no Idea of God; 'tis very ſtrange to ſuppoſe, that a Politick Man ſhould Invent, and the World Receive the Idea or Notion of That which 'tis impoſſible for any one to invent, or receive. 'Tis a little odd, that a Man ſhould firſt cunningly deviſe he knew not what, and then the affrighted World believe they knew not what; and that we ſhould prove and aſſert, and the Atheiſt ridicule and deny the Exiſtence of That which we do none of us all know any thing about! But ſo it muſt be, according to the Atheiſt's Uniform Scheme of Things.

Again, If, as he aſſerts, *all our Conceptions be Paſſive*, and *all our Knowledge*, *Senſe:* which way could this Cunning Inventer of a God, come by his Notion or Idea of Him? how could his Mind attain any ſuch *feigning* and *ampliating* Power? For according to the Atheiſt's Principles, the Mind could have no Active, much leſs Spontaneous Power at all; but all our Idea's and Conceptions would be meer neceſſary Motions, mechanically occaſioned by the Impreſſions of External Objects. So that as *Protagoras* tells us (in *Plato*'s *Theætet.*) Οὔτε γὰρ τὰ μὴ ὄντα δυνατὸν δοξάσαι, ὅτε ἄλλα παρ' ἃ ἂν πάσχῃ: *'Tis neither poſſible to conceive that which is not, nor indeed any thing elſe, but only juſt as our Mind ſuffers it by Impreſſions from without.* And therefore no Man could ever poſſibly Invent any thing at all, nor have any Power within him of putting or joining together two or more ſimple idea's, or of ampliating or enlarging any Idea or Notion at all; much leſs could he grow ſo very

very subtle as to Invent the Notion of a Deity. And as no Law-giver nor Politician could, we see, have Invented the Notion of a Deity, if he had had a mind so to do; so it appears very weak and foolish in him to do it, if he could. For while there was no Belief among Men, of any Divine and Almighty Power, he would have been a *mortal God himself*, (a) as *Hobbs* calls the Commonwealth: His Will would have been his Law; and Men's Obedience to Him, would have been founded in the Fear they were under of his great Power. And this, according to the Atheistical Principles, would have been a much better Stay and Support to his Authority, than the idle Obligations of Conscience and Religion. For the aforesaid Author tells us, (b) *That if the Fear of Spirits* (*i. e.* of a God) *were taken away, Men would be much better fitted for Civil Obedience.* And in another place he goes a little further yet, and saith, (c) That *'tis impossible any Government can stand, where any other than the Sovereign hath a Power of giving greater Rewards than Life, and greater Punishments than Death.* That is, where there is any Obligation on Mens Minds to a Divine and Almighty Power: which they will chuse to obey, rather than the Unlawful Commands of an Arbitrary Prince, *that can only kill the Body.* Now there is no doubt but that this is true of such a Power or Government, as that he calculated his *Leviathan* for; *i. e. One absolutely Arbitrary and Tyrannical.* And all Power must be so, if there be no God, and no Antecedent Good and Evil; but what the Will of the Sovereign shall make so, as Mr. *Hobbs* positively asserts there is not. Therefore that Man must act very unwisely, who when he

(a) *Leviathan*, p. 87.

(b) Ib. p. 70.

(c) Ib. p. 238.

was

was poſſeſſed of Power enough to give Laws to, and govern others by his ſole Will and Pleaſure, would ever invent the Notion of a God and Religion. For this was the direct way to cramp himſelf in his Power, to tie up his own Hands, and to let the People ſee that he himſelf is accountable to God, as well as they; 'tis to teach them, that the Power he hath, is but a Truſt committed to him by God, which he is to diſcharge for his Subjects Good and Advantage, and not only to gratifie his own Will and Humour. And this Notion might induce the Subjects of an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Prince, to eaſe him of the Trouble of a Government, that they perceived involved him in a great deal of *Guilt*, and would proportionably encreaſe the Account that he muſt one day give of his Stewardſhip. But,

2. As the Idea and Notion of a God, cannot poſſibly have been invented by any one; ſo neither could it have been underſtood or believed by Mankind, if it had been ſo. Had there been only one Perſon that had coined the Idea of a God, and no manner of Notion at all of any of his Attributes or Perfections previous to this, in the Minds of Men; what would it have ſignified, to tell them, that there was a God? how could they underſtand the meaning of a meer Arbitrary word, that had no manner of foundation in Nature, nor any Idea or Notion anſwering to it? *Words are but Marks of Things*, or *Signs* to know them or diſtinguiſh them by; and therefore a Word that is the Sign of what is abſolutely Nothing, or a Non-Entity, muſt needs be nonſenſe and unintelligible. And conſequently, he that ſhould attempt to awe Mankind with an empty Sound, that had no Signi-

Signification, would certainly be expoſed to contempt; and inſtead of affrighting others, would only be laughed at himſelf. The Author of *Anima Mundi*, ſaith, (*a*) *That to tell a Prophane Rabble of an Inviſible Deity, and of a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments, will ſignifie nothing at all:* and, *That Men will not for ſuch Metaphyſicks, forbear any manner of Pleaſure or Profit, how baſe ſoever.* How then could the Figment of a Deity gain admittance into the Minds of Men, at firſt? What would it ſignifie to tell Men of an Inviſible Power, that preſides over, and governs the World; when (according to the Atheiſt's Suppoſition) they had no manner of Notion of any ſuch Being *before*, and conſequently could not know what was meant by ſuch Words and Expreſſions. Should you tell them, indeed, of a potent Neighbour, that was coming ſtrongly armed, to take away their Life or Goods, they would look about them, and endeavour, by flight or force, to ſecure themſelves. But to tell them of a Power that they never ſaw nor heard any thing of before, and which they are told withal, is *impoſſible* to be ſeen or heard, or any way rendred an Object of their Senſes, could make no impreſſion at all on Mankind: or ſuppoſe that it could make ſome impreſſion, and frighten ſome Men at its firſt propoſal, how long would this laſt? No longer, at fartheſt, than till they were by Experience convinced that it was falſe and precarious, and that there was no Ground nor Reaſon to believe any ſuch thing. And this they muſt arrive at in a ſmall time, if the Thing were falſe. 'Tis impoſſible ſuch a Cheat as this, which it would have concerned every one to have examined,

(*a*) Pag. 36.

could long have maintained its Ground. Time discovers, and certainly lays open all impostures; and that the sooner, the more are concerned to enquire into it. And therefore had this Notion and Belief of a Deity had no other Original and Foundation than what the Atheists pretend, 'tis impossible it could have continued so long in the World; and much more so, that it should have gained ground as we know it hath continually done, and be established on better Principles, the more it hath been considered and understood. *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat*, saith *Cicero*. Besides, It cannot well be imagined that any Man should have the vanity to believe, that a thing which he knew he had invented himself, and which had no manner of ground nor foundation to support it from the Nature of the thing, could ever impose upon and delude Mankind, or indeed find any admittance in their Belief. He must needs think that others would be as sagacious to discover the Cheat, as he could be to contrive it; and that among so many Heads, some one would soon detect the Forgery of what must necessarily appear false and precarious to the common Sense and Reason of all Men. But,

3*dly*, and lastly, The Universality of the Notion and Belief of a God, is also a most demonstrative Argument, that it could not arise from the Invention of any Cunning and Designing Person. That there is such an Universal Notion of a Deity, cannot, I think, be denied by any one; and I doubt not but farther Discoveries will satisfie us, that there is a Notion of God even among those Barbarous and Savage People that are said to have no manner of Idea of Him, by a late

a late Ingenious Author. But ſuppoſing that it were ſo, that the Knowledge of a God were quite loſt, in three or four dark and uncultivated parts of the Earth, whoſe Inhabitants are ſo brutiſh, as ſcarce to think at all: this is no more an Argument againſt the Belief of God's being Univerſally diffuſed throughout the World, than *Monſters* and *Fools* are, that Men have not generally a *Humane Shape* and *Reaſon*. There are ſome Anomalies, Irregularities and Exceptions in all Things and Caſes, which yet are not by any accounted of force enough to over-turn a general Rule. I ſhall not ſay much to this Point, it having been ſo largely and frequently handled already; only I cannot omit the Teſtimony of ſome of the Ancient Writers, who are very expreſs, that there is an Univerſal Notion of a God among Mankind, and which they looked upon to be Natural, or by way of Anticipation. *There is*, ſaith *Cicero*, (*a*) *a Notion of a God impreſſed on the Minds of all Men.* And in another place, ſaith he, (*b*) *What kind of Nation or People is there any where to be found, who have not, without learning it from others, a Prolepſis or Anticipation of a Deity.* And in two other places, he tells us, (*c*) *That there is no Nation ſo barbarous and wild, who do not acknowledge the Being of a God, and ſome how or other revere and worſhip him.* *Seneca*, in his *Epiſtles*, (*d*) frequently ſaith the ſame thing. *Sextus Empiricus* owns alſo, (*e*) *That all Men have a common Notion of* Κοινὴν γὰρ πάλιν προλήψιν ἔχουσι πάντες ἄνθρωποι περὶ Θεοῦ, καθ' ἣν μακάριόν τι καὶ ἄφθαρτον καὶ τέλειον εἶναι ὑπολαμβάνουσι, καὶ πάντες κατὰ ἀνεπίδεκτον.

(*a*) *In omnium Animis Deorum Notionem natura ipſa impreſſit.* De Nat. Deorum, *lib.* 1.

(*b*) *Quæ Gens eſt, aut quod Genus Hominum, quòd non habeat ſine Doctrinâ, anticipationem quandam Deorum, quam appellat* προλήψιν *Epicurus.* Ib. c. 32.

(*c*) *Tuſcul. Quæſt.* l. 1. *De Legib.* l. 1.

(*d*) Vid. *Epiſt.* 117, 118. *De Benefic.* 4. 4.

God, by way of Prolepsis; and believe Him to be a most Blessed and Happy Being, Incorruptible, Immortal, and uncapable of any kind of Evil. And he concludes, *That 'tis unreasonable to assert, that all Men should come to attribute the same Properties to God by Chance, and not rather be induced thereunto by the Dictates of Nature.* *Maximus Tyrius* hath a very plain Passage, to prove this common Notion of a God, (*f*) *Though,* saith he, *there be so much quarrelling, difference and jangling in the World, yet you may see this agreed in all over the Earth, that there is* One God, the King and Father of all. *This the Greek and the Barbarian both say, the Islander and the Inhabitant of the Continent, the Wise and the Unwise alike.* *Aristotle* saith, (*g*) *That all Men have a Pre-notion concerning the Gods,* even both *Greeks and Barbarians.* And in another place, he hath a very remarkable passage to this sence, *That there is a very Ancient Tradition* (*which our Fore-fathers have handed down to Posterity, in a Mythological Dress*) *That there are Gods; and that the Divine Nature sustains or encompasseth all things. But this Tradition,* he saith, *had, in process of time, some Figments connected with it; as, that the Gods had Humane Shapes, or those of other Creatures,* &c. *which if we separate from it, we may suppose it at first divinely spoken and delivered, That the Gods were the First Beings.* (*h*)

Τελέως ὃ ἔστιν ἄλογον, τὸ κατὰ τύχην πάντα τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὑπιβάλλειν ἰδιώμασιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ φυσικῶς ὅπως ἐκκινεῖσθαι. *Adv. Mathem.* p. 314.

(*f*) Ἐν τοσούτῳ δὲ πολέμῳ καὶ φύσει καὶ διαφωνίᾳ, ἕνα ἴδοις ἂν ἐν πάσῃ γῇ ὁμόφωνον λόγον καὶ νόμον, ὅτι Θεὸς εἷς πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ —— τοῦτο δὲ ὁ Ἕλλην λέγει καὶ ὁ βάρβαρος λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἠπειρώτης καὶ ὁ θαλάττιος, ὁ σοφὸς, καὶ ὁ ἄσοφος. Dis. 1. p. 5.

(*g*) Πάντες δὲ ἄνθρωποι περὶ Θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν — Βάρβαροι καὶ Ἕλληνες. De Cœlo, l. 1. c. 3.

(*h*) Παραδέδοται δὴ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παλαιῶν, ἐν μύθου σχήματι καταλελειμμένα τοῖς ὑστέροις, ὅτι Θεοί τέ εἰσιν ὅτι, καὶ θεῖον τὸ περιέχειν τὴν ὅλην φύσιν, &c. Aristot. Metaph. l. 14. c. 8. p. 483. *Paris.* 1654.

Many

Many more Teſtimonies might be produced to prove this Point, that it was the concurrent Opinion, of all the Ancient Heathen Writers, that there was a common Notion or Belief of a Deity in the Minds of Men; But theſe, I think, are ſufficient. And now what can the Atheiſt ſay to ſuch a Proof as this? What greater Evidence can be deſired of the Truth of any thing, than that it hath been believed by all Men in all Ages and Places of the World? 'Tis a very good way of Arguing from Authority, that *Ariſtotle* uſes in his Topicks. That, ſaith he, which ſeems true to *ſome Wiſe Men*, ought to appear a little probable; what *moſt Wiſe Men* believe, is yet further probable; and what *moſt* Men, both *Wiſe* and *Unwiſe* do agree in, is much more probable yet; But what is received as Truth by the *general conſent* of *all* Mankind in all Ages of the World, hath certainly the higheſt degree of Evidence, of this Kind, that is poſſible. And what hath ſuch a Teſtimony, 'tis intolerable Arrogance and Folly for any Men to deny; and to ſet up their ſingle Judgments and Opinion contrary to the common Suffrage of all Mankind. But they are ſo puff't up with Pride and Vanity, that they do not ſee the Weakneſs and Precarioufneſs of what they advance, nor how inconſiſtent it is with their other Tenets. If it have but the appearance of contradicting the received Notion that we have of a God, and if it do but ſeem never ſo little to Undermine Religion, they will ſet it up at a venture as a Demonſtration, and ſtick to it, let it be never ſo inconſiſtent with what at other times they deliver. Thus ſometimes they will aſſert, that there is no Univerſal Idea or Notion

Notion of a God. At other times they will grant there is *ſuch an One*, but that it was Coined and Invented by ſome Cunning Politician a long while ago, before any Books or Hiſtories were written, and by him communicated by Tradition to Poſterity. But here they do not conſider that this will neceſſarily derive all Mankind from one common Parent: which is a thing they will, at another time, by no means admit of, leſt it ſhould ſeem to countenance the Story of *Adam* or *Noah*: which is ſaid to be *nothing but an old Jewiſh Tradition.* And that 'tis impoſſible to account for the Peopling of *America* and All *Iſlands* remote from the Continent, without ſuppoſing their Inhabitants to be *Aborigines*, and to ſpring out of the Earth like Muſhrooms. And then, to account for the General Notion, that they cannot deny, theſe *Aborigines* have of a God; as before they made *One* Wiſe Man Invent it, now they will ſuppoſe it to be done by a *Hundred* ſuch Cunning Politicians: who, though in different Places and Ages of the World, yet did all light by chance on the very ſame Notion of a God, and Abuſe and Cheat Mankind juſt after the ſame manner; and though this be the moſt extravagant and ridiculous Aſſertion that ever can poſſibly come into the Mind of Man, as well as contradictory to the former, yet 'tis all one for that; this, or any thing elſe, ſhall be ſuppoſed rather than they will yield to the Conviction of Truth, and allow the Notion of a Deity to have a real Foundation. But 'tis no wonder to find Men that wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the cleareſt Light, to go forward and backward, and often times run againſt each other in the dark Mazes of Error: thoſe

muſt

must needs be at a Loss who neglect His Guidance, *who is the Way, the Truth and the Light, and that Spirit which would lead them into all Truth*; and those, no doubt, may easily miss of the true Knowledge of God, who are resolved they *will not seek after Him, and all whose Thoughts are, that there is no God.*

F I N I S.

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LONDON,
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JOHN iv. 24.

God is a Spirit ——

THE Occaſion of theſe words was this: Our Bleſſed Lord, in his way into *Galilee*, paſſed through *Sychar*, a City of *Samaria*, near to which was the famous Well of the Patriarch *Jacob*. To this Well our Saviour went to refreſh himſelf on his Journey; and as he always made it his buſineſs to be doing Good, took occaſion from a Woman's coming to draw Water, to diſcourſe with her about the Buſineſs of his Miſſion. By way of Introduction to which, He firſt gives her ſome Proofs of his being endowed with a Super-natural Knowledge. From whence ſhe juſtly concluding Him to be a Prophet, or a Perſon enrich'd with Divine and Extraordinary Gifts and Qualifications; ſhe ask'd Him concerning one great Point that had been long in diſpute between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, (*i. e.*) about the true Place for Religious Worſhip. The *Jews* rightly aſſerted *Jeruſalem* to be *the Place where Men ought to Worſhip*. The *Samaritans* contended, that it ought to be with them, at *Shiloh*, in *Mount Ephraim*, where the Ark and Tabernacle were placed long before the building of the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and where alſo the Patriarchs, before the Law, did uſe to ſacrifice to, and worſhip God. They pretended alſo to be the true Succeſſors of *Jacob*, and of the Ancient Patriarchs,

and conſequently, that their Place of Worſhip had the greateſt Support from Antiquity. This Pretence was an Umbrage to that Temple that they ſet up in *Mount Gerizim* (in the time of *Darius*) in oppoſition to that at *Jeruſalem*, (*a*) and which they ſuppoſed to give an Holineſs to that Mountain, even after the Temple was deſtroyed. And the *Samaritan* Verſion of the *Pentateuch* hath plainly falſified the Text of *Moſes*, in *Deut.* xxvii. 4. by ſubſtituting *Mount Gerizim* inſtead of *Mount Ebal*, in order to gain ſome Honour to this Celebrated Place. But notwithſtanding all theſe mighty Pretenſions, the *Samaritans* were perfectly in the wrong. The Ancient Pedigree that they boaſted ſo much of, was wholly falſe and precarious. For they were, in reality, only the Succeſſors of ſome *Aſſyrians*, who were planted in the Cities of *Samaria* by *Salmaneſer*, when he carry'd the Tribe of *Ephraim* Captive into *Aſſyria*; as you may read at large, 2 *King.* xxvi. 24.

(*a*) *Joſeph. Antiquit.* l. 11. c. 8.

This therefore being the true State of the Caſe between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*; our Saviour's Anſwer to the Woman was, That the *Jews* were in the right, becauſe they worſhipped the True God, and that too in ſuch a manner as was agreeable to that Revelation God had given them of his Will: *We know what we worſhip* —— But the *Samaritans* were doubly miſtaken, both as to the Object, and as to the Place of their Worſhip. They, He tells her, *worſhipped they knew not what.* In which, it ſeems probable, that he may allude to what is ſaid of their Anceſtors the *Aſſyrians* in the Place before mentioned, 2 *King.* xvii. 26. (*viz.*) That *they worſhipped the God of the Land.* That is, They blindly paid their

their Devotion to the God of their New Country, without having any true and real Knowledge of him: But along with him, they worſhipped their own *Aſſyrian* Deities too; ſuch as *Succoth-Benoth*, *Aſhima-Nergal*, and the like. Our Saviour tells this Woman alſo, That a Time of Reformation was now at hand, when the Worſhip of God ſhould not be confined either to *Jeruſalem*, or *Mount Gerizim*; and that a more pure and Spiritual manner of Worſhip ſhould be eſtabliſhed; one that was not embarraſs'd with ſo vaſt a number of External Rites and Ceremonies, but one more ſuitable to the Nature of God, and to the Improved Sentiments of Mankind: for *God*, ſaith he, *is a Spirit*; and *they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* This ſeems to be the Occaſion and Connexion of theſe words: which having briefly ſhewed you, I proceed now to ſpeak to the words themſelves, *God is a Spirit.*

By which Terms, *God* and *Spirit*, thus connected together, we underſtand an Infinite Being, moſt Wiſe and Powerful, containing in Himſelf all poſſible Perfection, without being ſubject to any of thoſe Defects and Limitations which we plainly diſcover in Material Beings. And after this manner the Holy Scriptures do deſcribe God Almighty to us; they attribute ſuch Perfections and Qualifications to Him, as we can have no poſſible Idea of, as belonging to Matter.

Body or *Matter* is a Sluggiſh, Inſenſible, Paſſive and Unintelligent Thing, not poſſibly able to move of it ſelf, or to act or perform any thing by its own Power; but all the Motion and Activity that it hath, comes to it by Communication from ſomething that is without it, or diſtinct from it. But *all Power, both in Heaven and Earth,*

Earth, is the Lords: In his Hands are Power and Might: with Him is Wiſdom and Strength, he hath Counſel and Underſtanding. He made all Things; He ſtretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and ſpreadeth abroad the Earth by himſelf. There is none like to Him, who created and maintaineth all things, and in whom all Things Live, and Move, and have their Being (*a*).

(*a*) 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12. Job 12. 9, &c. Iſa. 44. 24, &c. Acts 17. 24, 25, &c.

The *Form* and *Faſhion* of all Material Things, we ſee, is continually flitting and changing, and there is nothing among them of any conſtant and laſting duration. But God is *Immutable* and *Eternal*, the ſame *Yeſterday, to Day, and for ever; He was, and is, and is to come*, and *with him is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of Turning* (*b*).

(*b*) Rev. 4. 8. Jam. 1. 17. Deut. 32. 27.

Material Beings are all *limited and imperfect* as to their *Extent*. The Place they are in confines and circumſcribes them; Nothing elſe can be there with them, nor they themſelves any where elſe. *But the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain God*, which yet he more than fills with his Preſence: *which Preſence no one can flee or hide himſelf from: He is the ſearcher even of our hearts, and knoweth the moſt ſecret thoughts of Men.* There is *no Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight, but all things are Naked and open before him* (*c*). This and ſuch like is the Account that the Sacred Scripture gives of God, which is plainly Inconſiſtent with his being *Material* or *Corporeal*: and therefore it calls him in the words of my Text *a Spirit*, a Divine, moſt Excellent and Perfect Being, that diſcovers himſelf to our Reaſon and Underſtanding, but cannot poſſibly do ſo to our Senſes; *for him no Eye hath ſeen nor can ſee; he is Inviſible, he is a Spirit.*

(*c*) 2 Chron. 6. 18. Jer. 23. 24. Jer. 17. 10. & 20. 12.

But

But here the Atheiſt thinks he hath a ſufficient Ground for inſuperable Objections; Here his Philoſophy is called in to his Aſſiſtance; and by the Strength of that, he will undertake to maintain, that there is not, nor cannot be any ſuch thing as *a Spirit*, (i. e.) Any *Incorporeal* or *Immaterial* Being or *Subſtance*. And therefore ſince the Sacred Scripture and Divines do deſcribe the Deity after this abſurd and impoſſible manner, 'tis a good Argument (ſay they) that there is no ſuch Being at all: For when Men pretend to Deſcribe God after ſuch a manner as is Nonſenſical, Unintelligible and Impoſſible, (and yet ſay, that theirs is the only right way of Speaking of him): When Men attribute ſuch a manner of Exiſtence to him, as we know is contradictory to the Nature of Things; we have then juſt Ground to disbelieve all that they advance, in defence of ſo ridiculous and abſurd a Notion, and conſequently to conclude that there is no God at all. And hence we ſee theſe Men raiſe another Great Objection againſt the Being of a God, *viz.* That his Nature is ſo Deſcribed as to be *Unintelligible* and *Nonſenſe*. Which I ſhall now therefore endeavour to Refute.

And in Order to ſhew the Groundleſneſs and Invalidity of this Objection, I ſhall in purſuance of my former Method:

I. Give you the ſenſe of the Modern and Ancient Atheiſts on this Point. And then,

II. Endeavour to Refute what they Advance, and ſhew how Unreaſonable it is to build Atheiſm and Infidelity on ſo weak and invalid a Foundation. And,

1. I ſhall give you the Modern and Ancient Atheiſts Senſe on this Point.

Mr. *Hobbs*, that lofty Pretender to Philoſophy, declares that to ſay there is any *Immaterial Subſtance*, is not ſo much an *Error*, as it is *Nonſenſe*; *'tis uſing an Inſignificant word, whereby we conceive nothing but the Sound* (*a*). And in his *Kingdom of Darkneſs*, where he undertakes to correct the Univerſity Learning, he is very Angry with *Ariſtotle*'s Metaphyſicks, becauſe it brought in, as he ſaith (tho' falſly, as I ſhall prove hereafter) the Doctrine or Notion of *Separated Eſſences*, and alſo of *Immateriality* and *Incorporeity*; for what is not *Corporeal*, he ſaith, *is Nothing*, and conſequently *no where*. And this he undertakes to prove from a Paſſage which he ſeems to have borrowed from *Ocellus Lucanus*, tho' without naming him; and which, tho' it be a poor Sophiſm, and much worſe than thoſe he is condemning; yet he boldly lays it down as a Demonſtration. *The Univerſe*, ſaith he, *is Corporeal, that is to ſay Body, and hath the Dimenſions of Magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth; alſo every Part of Body is Body; and conſequently every Part of the Univerſe is Body, and that which is not Body is no Part of the Univerſe. And becauſe the Univerſe is all, that which is no Part of the Univerſe is Nothing, and conſequently no where* (*b*). In another place he ſaith, *That no Man can conceive any thing but he muſt conceive it in ſome place, of ſome Determinate Magnitude, and as that which may be divided into Parts* (*c*). And again, p. 17. and 207. he tells us, *That an Incorporeal Subſtance is a Contradictory and Inconſiſtent Name; 'tis all one as if a Man ſhould ſay, an Incorporeal Body; which words*

(*a*) *Leviath.* P. 15.

(*b*) *Leviath.* p. 371. 267.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 11.

words when they are joined together, do destroy one another; and therefore Body and Substance are all one (*a*). Elsewhere he tells us, That *the proper Signification of the word Spirit in common speech, is either a subtile, fluid and invisible Body, or else a Ghost or other Idle Phantasm of our Imagination* (*b*), and a little after he asserts, *that to Men that understand the meaning of the words Substance and Incorporeal, they imply a Contradiction; and that to say an Angel or Spirit is an Incorporeal Substance, is to say in effect there is no Angel nor Spirit* (*c*). And this Notion he defends in his Answer to Bishop *Bramhall*'s Book written against his *Leviathan*; and perseveres in asserting *that God himself is a Most Pure simple and corporeal Spirit*; and he defines a Spirit in General to be a *thin, fluid, transparent and invisible Body* (*d*). Thus also *Spinoza*, in his *Opera Posthuma*, p. 13. determines *Extended Substance* (that is *Body*) to be one of the Infinite Attributes of the Deity, and this he undertakes to demonstrate from hence; that there is not (as he saith) any Other Substance but God; and who consequently is a *Corporeal*, as well as a *Cogitative* Being. *Deus est res extensa* (*e*). This, you perceive, is the plain sense of these Writers, That there is no other *Substance* but *Body*; and consequently to talk of a Spirit or an Incorporeal Substance, is to them perfect Nonsense and Contradiction. But tho' this be their Opinion and Assertion, yet they did not Invent it, nor first find it out: they are as far from being Originals in this, as in other things; for herein they do but Copy the Sentiments of the Ancient Atheists, and tread exactly in their Steps. That there was nothing but Body in the World, was long ago the Assertion

(*a*) *Leviath.* P. 17. 207.

(*b*) *Leviath.* P. 203.

(*c*) *Leviath.* P. 214.

(*d*) Answer to Bishop *Bramhall*, P. 31, 36.

(*e*) *Ethices Pars* 2. *Prop.* 2. P. 42.

of ſuch unthinking Men as our Modern Atheiſts are. *Plato* tells us, *That there were ſome in his Time, who aſſerted nothing to be Subſtance but what they could feel, and which would reſiſt their Touch: and theſe Men affirmed Body and Subſtance to be the ſame thing; and what they were not able to lay hold of, and to graſp with their Hands, they ſaid was really nothing at all. And if any one happened to talk with them about any thing that was not Body, they would ridicule and deſpiſe him, and not hear a word more that he ſhould ſay* (*b*).

(*a*) Διϊσχυρίζονται τοῦτο εἶδος μόνον ὂ παρέχει περισβολὴν, καὶ ἁπτὸν πνὰ, παυλὸν σῶμα καὶ οὐσίαν ὁριζόμενοι.— ἂν πᾶν ὃ μὴ συναλοὶ ταῖς χερσὶ συμπίεζειν εἰσὶν, ὡς ἀρα τοῦτο οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν ὄν.— καὶ ἄλλων εἴτις φυσὶ μὴ σῶμα ἔχον εἶδος, καταφρονοῦντες τὸ παράπαν, καὶ οὐδὲν ἐθέλοντες ἄλλο ἀκούειν. Sophiſt. p. 172. Ficin.

Ariſtotle acquaints us, That juſt ſuch were the Atheiſtical Principles of his Contemporaries. *They affirm* (ſaith he) *Matter or Body to be the only Subſtance, and that all other things are only Paſſions and Affections of it.* And in another place, he ſaith, that theſe Men aſſerted *all things to be one*; *That there is but one Nature only, which is the Matter of all Things, and this is Corporeal, and hath magnitude* (*b*). And this was long before the Opinion alſo of *Leucippus* and *Democritus*.

(*b*) τοῦτο καὶ πασιν ὁμοίως φάσιν εἶναι τὸ ὂν ἅπασαν οὐσίαν, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντα πάθη τούτων.— Ἕν τὸ πᾶν, καὶ μίαν εἶναι τινα φύσιν, ὡς ὕλην πθέασι καὶ ταύτην σωματικὴν καὶ μέγεθος ἔχουσαν. Metaph. l. 1. c. 7.

Epicurus argues againſt *Plato*, that *there can be no Incorporeal Deity*; *not only becauſe no Man can frame a conception of an Incorporeal Subſtance, but alſo becauſe whatever is Incorporeal, muſt needs want Senſe, and Prudence and Pleaſure; all which things are included in the Notion of God: And therefore an Incorporeal Deity*, ſaith he, *is a Contradiction* (*c*). And his Followers, as appears by *Lucretius*, continued in the ſame

(*c*) Dr. Cudw. Intel. Syſt. P. 20.

ſame Opinion, that there is no other Subſtance in Nature but Body (*a*); and they had no Notion of any Incorporeal thing, but their Vacuum or Empty ſpace, which was really nothing at all.

(*a*) *Præterea nihil eſt quod poſſis dicere ab omni Corpore ſejunctum*, &c. Lib. 1. v. 431.

Sextus Empiricus tells us, that all the *Epicureans*, and ſome of the Stoicks, as *Baſileides* in particular, maintained μηδὲν εἶναι ἀσώματον, *that there was nothing Incorporeal or Immaterial* (*b*). By theſe Teſtimonies we ſee plainly, that the Modern Atheiſts tranſcribe the Ancient Opinions exactly, and have been able to add very little to them. And the Notion that Mr. *Hobbs* ſeems ſo fond of, and which he would fain ſet up as his own Diſcovery, That a Spirit is nothing *but a Thin fluid and tranſparent Body:* ſeems to me to be plainly taken from the σῶμα λεπτόμερες, which *Ariſtotle* tells us, was the Definition that ſome then gave of *a Spirit*, or the Soul of Man.

(*b*) Adv. Math. p. 267.

And thus having truly ſtated the Caſe, and ſhewed you what the Sentiments of the Ancient and Modern Atheiſts were and are, as to the Matter before us. I ſhall now proceed to Examine by what Reaſons and Arguments they endeavour to ſupport their Aſſertion, That there is no ſuch thing as any *Incorporeal Subſtance*, but that whatever really is, *is Body*. And here I find their main and chief Argument to be This; that an Immaterial Subſtance is an *Unconceivable Thing:* 'Tis what no Man can poſſibly have any notion or conception of; 'tis a perfect contradiction in Terms, and conſequently Nonſenſe and Impoſſible. This is every where almoſt the Language of Mr. *Hobbs*, as I have before obſerved. He alſo pretends to diſcover the τὸ διὰ τί τοῦ ψεύδους, the true Cauſe of this Fiction about Immaterial Subſtances. The Notion,

he tells us, took its riſe from the Abuſe of abſtracted Words, and ſuch-like Metaphyſical and Scholaſtical Terms, which ſome have fanſied as real Entities ſeparated and diſtinct from the Subject, or Matter, of which they are Attributes or Qualities only. Thus for Inſtance, *becauſe we can conſider Thinking or a Reaſoning Power alone by it ſelf, and diſtinct from Body; therefore ſome have been ſo fooliſh as to conclude that it is not the Action or Accident of that Body in which it is, but a real Subſtance by it ſelf. And 'tis upon this Account, that* (a) *when a Man is dead and buried, they will ſay, his Soul (that is, his Life) can walk ſeparated from the Body, and is ſeen by Night among the Graves,* whereas Life is only *a Name of Nothing,* (b) and the *Soul or Mind of Man is in reality Nothing elſe but the reſult of Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body* (c). 'Tis like the forms and qualities of Other things, depending purely on the Mechaniſm, Modification, and Motion of the Parts of Matter, according as it happens to be variouſly diſpoſed, figured and agitated; and conſequently it can be nothing at all diſtinct from that Body whoſe Form or Quality it is. And this Soul or Mind, or any other Faculty or Quality in Man, coming once to be conceived as a thing diſtinct from the Body, and being Inviſible and Inſenſible, hath been called by ſuch Names as we uſe to give to fine Subtile and aereal Bodies. Such as πνεῦμα, *Spiritus*, and the like: which do properly ſignifie the *Wind*, or, which is near akin to it, the *Breath* of Man (d). And ſo Mr. *Hobbs* tells us, that in order to expreſs our greater honour of God, the name of Spirit hath been given to him likewiſe, as better expreſſing to vulgar Apprehenſions his fine aereal

(a) *Leviath.* p. 373.

(b) p. 372.

(c) *Leviath.* p. 190. & De Cive C 15. §. 14. And in another place, he ſaith, *Mens nihil aliud eſt præterquam motus in quibuſdam partibus corporis Organici.*

(d) *Leviath.* p. 207, 208.

aereal and Subtile Nature, than the groſſer word of Body. But however, *Philoſophers* and *Men of ſenſe* muſt take care, and not be impoſed upon by inſignificant words, ſo far as to imagine there can in reality be any ſuch thing as an *Incorporeal Subſtance:* for that is, when throughly conſidered, an abſolute *Contradiction and Nonſenſe.* 'Tis nothing *but an empty Name*, with which ſome poor Wretches are frighted, as the Birds are *from the Corn by an empty Doublet, a Hat and a Crooked Stick* (*e*); as he is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf. And this is the ſumm of what this mighty Philoſopher advances againſt Immaterial Subſtances. *Spinoza* is the only Man beſides, which I have met with, that aims at diſproving the Exiſtence of Incorporeal Beings: Which in his *Opera poſthuma* he pretends demonſtratively to do. But his chief and indeed only Argument is this (as I hinted before) that there is but *one only Subſtance* in the World, and That is God. *Matter* or *Body* he aſſerts to be one of the Attributes of this Subſtance, or the Mode by which God is conſidered as *Res extenſa*; from whence he concludes, that there can be no Subſtance but what is corporeal, becauſe Body is an Eſſential Property of his *one only Subſtance*, the Divine Nature. The Preciouſneſs of which Obſcure and Metaphyſical way of Arguing, I ſhall plainly ſhew below.

(*e*) *Leviath.* P. 373.

And, Thus having given you the ſum, of what theſe Writers advance againſt the Doctrine of Incorporeal Subſtances, I ſhall next proceed to Refute it, and to ſhew you how weak and inconcluſive their Arguments and Objections are. In order to which, I ſay, In the Firſt place,

1. That 'tis a very precarious and groundleſs way of

of arguing, to deny the Exiſtence of any thing only from our particular Apprehenſions and Conceptions not being able to maſter it. For it will not in the leaſt follow, that there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance or a Spirit; becauſe *ſome few Men* pretend that they cannot conceive how any ſuch thing can poſſibly be. And I have already ſhewed, (*a*) that we have very juſt reaſon to allow the truth of, and to be ſatisfied of the Exiſtence of many things, whoſe Nature neither we, nor perhaps any one elſe, can fully Underſtand and Comprehend. Theſe Gentlemen pretend that they cannot conceive or have any Idea of an *Incorporeal Subſtance*. But yet they think, I ſuppoſe, that they have a clear Idæa and Conception of Body. Tho' ſhould you put them to deſcribe it, they would be very much at a loſs. For as one hath well obſerved, (*Mr.* Lock *in his Eſſay of* Humane Underſtanding, *Book* 2. *c.* 23.) if we carefully examine our Idea of Subſtance, we ſhall find that it is a kind of *complex one*, conſiſting as it were of ſeveral Idea's coexiſting together: which becauſe we are apt to conceive as one thing, we give it the General Name of *Subſtance:* as imagining that word to expreſs ſomething, tho' in reality we know not what, which is the *ſupport* of theſe Accidents or Qualities which occaſion the Idea's we have in our Minds of it. Let us therefore take any corporeal Subſtance, as ſuppoſe Gold; and inquire in our Mind what is that *Support*, *Subſtratum* or *Subſtance*, in which the Accidents of *Yellowneſs*, *great Specifick Weight*, and *ſtrange Ductility under the Hammer* do inhere; all which concurr to give us that complex Idea which we have of Gold; Shall we not find our ſelves

(*a*) See my Second Sermon.

ſelves put to it how to conceive, or to have a clear Idea of this? If we ſhould ſay that the ſubject of theſe Properties are the ſolid extended Parts; we ſhall not be much the nearer Satisfaction: for our Mind will be inquiſitive agen what is the Support or Subject of that *Extenſion* and *Impenetrability*. We may ſay, indeed, that 'tis the Subſtance it ſelf: which is a word that we uſe, and implies ſomething or other that is the Support of theſe Properties, but what that is, we have, I think, no clear and certain Idea. When yet we have clear and diſtinct Conceptions enough of theſe Properties which we find in this Body, and from whence we pronounce it to be Gold. So if on the other hand we take any Incorporeal Subſtance, as ſuppoſe the *Mind* or *Soul of Man*; and enquire what is the true Support of that *Self-moving Power*, that *Reaſoning* and *Cogitative* Faculty, and that *Liberty* or Freedom of Action which we plainly perceive to be inherent in it: we ſhall indeed be at a loſs, but yet no more than we were before in reference to Gold. For as from conſidering the Properties peculiar to that Body, we were ſatisfied that they muſt be inherent in *ſomething*, tho' *how* or in *what*, we have no clear Idea; ſo when we conſider *Life*, *Cogitation* and *Spontaneous Motion* in our Soul, we know very well that thoſe *more real* Properties muſt have ſomething alſo for their Support, or ſome Subſtance to inhere in: tho' what that is, and the peculiar manner of this we are wholly ignorant of. But then we have as juſt reaſon to believe that this Subſtance is real, as that the Subſtance of Gold is ſo. For Cogitation, Life, and Spontaneous Action, are Properties undoubtedly of as real a Nature

ture as *great Intenſive Weight*, *Yellowneſs* and *Ductility* can poſſibly be. And as we cannot but conclude both theſe to be real Subſtances, ſo we cannot alſo but conceive them as Natures abſolutely diſtinct and different from each other, and which can have no neceſſary dependance upon and relation to each other: for we can never imagine that Gold can be ever brought to *think*, *reaſon* or *move* it ſelf *ſpontaneouſly*, any more than we can conceive a Soul or Mind to be *yellow*, *heavy* or *ductile*. That is, we have quite different Idea's of each of them, and which nothing but wilful or long habituated Ignorance can ever make us confound together. And thus it appears to me that we may have as clear an Idea of Incorporeal Subſtance, as we have of Body; and that the former is no more unconceivable than the latter. And therefore 'tis as abſurd to argue againſt the Exiſtence of a Spirit, only from our not having any clear Idea of the Subſtance of a Spirit; as it would be to ſay there is no ſuch thing as Body, becauſe we don't know exactly what the Subſtance of Body is: which I dare ſay no Man can affirm that he doth. 'Tis very poſſible that Men may be ſo blinded and prejudiced by falſe Principles, ſo ſtupified by Ignorance, Idleneſs or Vice, and ſo engaged and enſlaved to a peculiar ſett of Notions, which advance and ſupport that way of acting and proceeding which they take delight in, that a great many things may appear Unconceivable and Impoſſible to them, which ſhall be far from being ſo to others, whoſe Minds are free, and more enured to thinking. Should you tell a Man, who is a Stranger to Geometry and Aſtronomy, of the many admirable and ſurprizing Truths

that

that can certainly be demonstrated from the Principles of those Noble Sciences, he would boldly pronounce them Impossible; and all your Discourse and Proof (should you attempt any such thing) would to such a Person be Nonsense, and your words meer empty and insignificant Sounds. And there are many Persons in the World, on whom the cleerest and strongest Method of Reasoning that ever was, will make no manner of impression at all, because their Minds are not at all enured to a close way of Arguing and Thinking. And truly the Atheistical Writers do discover so poor a Knowledge in Philosophy, and so very little acquaintance with true Reasoning and Science; that 'tis no wonder at all that they should not be able to conceive and comprehend a great many things which others are very well satisfied with. *I know very well,* saith the Ingenious Person before cited, *that People whose Thoughts are immersed in Matter, and who have so subjected their Minds to their Senses, that they seldom reflect on any thing beyond them, are apt to say they cannot comprehend a thinking thing*; *which perhaps is true*, &c. And therefore such a Philosopher as Mr. *Hobbs*, that defines *Knowledge to be Sense*; and saith, that *the Mind of Man is nothing but Motion in the Organical Parts of his Body*, may easily be infatuated so far as to assert that there is *no other Substance but Body*, and that a Spirit or Incorporeal Being, is a Nonsensical, Contradictory and Impossible Notion. While Others, who can raise their Minds a little higher, and who can penetrate farther into things, will be fully satisfied that such *Philosophy* is *Nonsense* and *Impossibility*. As indeed some Persons, in all Ages of the World, of which we have any Account, have ever been. For,

Essay of *Human Understanding*, p. 143.

2. Which is another very good Ground, from whence to refute this abſurd Opinion that there is no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Being: I ſay, there have been always many Perſons in the World, that have firmly believed and embraced the Doctrine of Immaterial Subſtances, and who have alſo aſſerted the Deity to be of that Nature. And this will Undeniably refute the two great Points of Mr. *Hobbs* his Opinion. For, if it be proved plainly that there hath been all along a received Belief and Opinion that there are Immaterial Subſtances, and that God himſelf is ſuch an One: it is then moſt clear and certain, that the Notion is neither inconceivable, contradictory, nor nonſenſe: and alſo that it did not take its Riſe and Original only from the Abuſe of the Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*. Not the *former*; for what is in its own Nature *unconceivable*, *nonſenſical* and *abſurd*, could never ſure gain an Admittance into the Belief of ſo many great Men, as we ſhall ſee preſently this Opinion did. *Not the latter*; for what was commonly received in the World before the time of *Ariſtotle*, could never be derived only from his and the Schoolmen's Philoſophy, as Mr. *Hobbs* is pleaſed to ſay this Belief of Immaterial Subſtances was. And that there was always in the World, a Notion and Belief of another more noble Subſtance than Body, and that the Deity was of an *Incorporeal* or *Spiritual Nature*, we have the united Suffrages of all the Ancient Writers that are preſerved down to our time.

(*a*) Lib. de Nat. Deorum, & Tuſcul. Quæſt. lib. 1.

Cicero tells us, That the Heathen Philoſophers generally defined God to be *Mens pura & ſincera, ſoluta & libera ab omni concretione mortali* (*a*); and ſpeaking

ſpeaking of *Thales Mileſius* in particular, he ſaith of him, *Aquam dixit eſſe Initium Rerum, Deum autem eum Mentem quæ ex aquâ cuncta fingeret.* Now this *Mind* they all diſtinguiſhed plainly from Matter, and looked upon it as a much more Noble Principle than 'twas poſſible to conceive Matter to be. *Lactantius* acquaints of *Pythagoras* (*a*). *Quòd unum deum confitetur, dicens Incorporalem eſſe mentem, quæ per omnem Naturam diffuſa & intenta, vitalem ſenſum cunctis Animalibus tribuat.* And *Plutarch* gives us much the ſame Account of him in his Books, *De Placitis Philoſophorum*, viz. *That he made two Principles; one Active, which was Mind or God: The other Paſſive, or the Matter of the World.* And thoſe Verſes of *Empedocles*, are very remarkable; wherein ſpeaking of the Deity, he aſſerts Him not to be of Humane ſhape; And alſo that,

(*a*) De Irâ Dei, c. 11. p. 742. *Oxon.*

Lib. 1. c. 3.

Οὐκ ἔϛιν πελάσαϛ ϐδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτὸν
Ἡμετέρϙις, ἢ χερσὶ λαϐεῖν——

(i. e.) *That he is no way perceivable by any of our Senſes*; which is as much as to ſay, he is *Incorporeal.* And in the next Lines he doth expreſly tell us what he is:

Ἀλλὰ φρὴν ἱερὴ καὶ ἀθέσφαϛον ἔπλετο μοῦνον,
Φρονέουσι κόσμου ἅπανθα κελαίνεσσα ϑοῇσιν.

A ſacred and ineffable Mind, which by ſwift Thoughts moves and actuates the whole World. Anaxagoras alſo aſſerted, That (*b*) *an ordering and regulating Mind was the firſt Principle of all things*; and this *Mind* he made, as *Ariſtotle* ſaith of him, μόνον τῶν ὄντων ἁπλοῦν καὶ ἀμιγῆ καὶ καθαρόν. *The only, pure, ſimple, and unmixt*

(*b*) *Plutarch* de Placitis Philoſoph. Lib. 1. c. 3. p. 876.

mixt thing in the World: thereby plainly diſtinguiſhing it from *Matter,* the Parts of which, he, who was as *Sextus Empericus* calls him φυσικώτατος knew very well to be promiſcuouſly blended and mixed togethere very where. *Sextus* alſo tells us, That *That Mind which* Anaxagoras *aſſerted to be God*; was δραστικὸν ἀρχὴν, *an Active Principle*; in oppoſition to *Matter,* which is a *Paſſive one*, * and this is agreeable to what the Poets ſay of *Spiritus intus alit*; *mens agitat molem*, &c. We are told likewiſe by *Sextus*, That *Xenophanes* held ὅτι εἷς καὶ ἀσώματος Θεὸς, *That there is but One God, and he Incorporeal.* And *Plutarch* deſcribing the Deity, hath theſe remarkable words, *God is Mind, a ſeparated Form perfectly unmixed with Matter, and without any thing that is paſſible,* νοῦς ἐν ὁ Θεὸς, χωριστὸν εἶδος, τελέως τὸ ἀμιγὲς πάσης ὕλης, μηδενὶ παθητῷ συμπεπλεγμένον. And in another place he aſſerts, ἀδύνατον ἀρχὴν μίαν ὕλην τῶν ὄντων ἐξ ἧς τὰ πάντα γέγονεν. *That 'tis impoſſible Matter alone can be the ſole Principle of all things* (*a*).

* *Sext. Empir. adv. Mathem. p. 309.*

(*a*) De Placit. Philoſ. l. 1. c. 3.

Plato every where diſtinguiſheth between corporeal, and incorporeal Subſtances, calling the former by the Names of αἰσθητὸν Senſible, and the latter always either ἀσώματον or νοητὸν, *immaterial* or *intelligible*; and he ſaith, *That certain intelligible and incorporeal Forms, are the true and firſt Subſtance; and that incorporeal Things which are the greateſt and moſt excellent of all others, are diſcoverable by reaſon only, and nothing elſe* (*b*).

(*b*) Νοητὰ εἴδη καὶ ἀσώματα εἶναι τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν καὶ πρώτην.—Τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα λόγῳ μόνον ἄλλῳ τῳ δῆλα, σαφῶς δέδεικται. In Polit. p. 547. Ficin.

And in another place, he ſaith, *That they were inſtructed by their forefathers, that Mind and a certain wonderful Wiſdom, did at firſt frame, and doth now govern all things.* His words are ὃ πρόσθεν ἡμῶν ἔλε-

γον,

γον, νῦν ἢ φερόμενόν τινα θαυμαστῶ συνετάττοσαν ἢ διακοσμοῦντα ξύμπαντα. In *Phileb.* p. 28. Which sufficiently shews the Antiquity of the Notion of an Incorporeal Deity, and the way also how they came by it. Of the same Opinion also was *Socrates*, as we are told by *Plutarch*, and others. *Lib. de Placit. Philos.* 1. *c.* 3. *Zeno* and the Stoicks defined the Deity to be φύσις νοερὰ ἢ λογική, *an Intellectual and Rational Nature*; or as *Plutarch* recites their Opinion, πνεῦμα νοερὸν ἢ ἐπ ἔχον μὲν μορφῶ, *an Intelligent Spirit devoid of all Bodily shape.* Ibid. And *Sextus Empericus* tells us of *Aristotle*, that he constantly asserted God to be *Incorporeal*, and *the Utmost Bounds of the Universe* (*a*). And *Aristotle* concludes his Book of Physicks with *affirming* (*b*) *that 'tis impossible the first Mover* (or God) *can have any Magnitude; but he must needs be devoid of Parts, and Indivisible.* And *Plutarch* gives us this as the received and common Opinion of the Stoicks, that God was πνεῦμα διῆκον δι ὅλης τῆς διαιρετὸν ὄξι ἢ κόσμε, *a Spirit that was extended, or did penetrate throughout the whole World.* De Placitis Philosoph. lib. 1. c. 3. p. 882.

(*a*) Adv. Math. p. 155.

(*b*) Ἀδύνατον τὸ πρῶτον κινοῦν ἔχειν τι μέγεθος — φανερὸν ποίνυν, ὅτι ἀμερὲς, ἢ ἀδιαίρετον ἔχον μέγεθος. Nat. Auscult. l. 8. c. 15.

Now by these Passages, and many others that might easily be produced, it appears very plain that the most Ancient Writers had a good clear Notion of God, and that they speak of him as of a *Mind* perfectly distinct from Matter, or as an immaterial or incorporeal Being. Many of them also deliver themselves very expressly as to the Soul of Man; which, as *Plutarch* tells us (*c*), *they generally asserted to be Incorporeal; and that it was naturally a Self-moving and Intelligible Substance.* But of this, more in another

(*c*) Οἱ περιπαυμένοι αὐτῶν μᾶλλον ἢ ἀσώματον ἢ αὐτοκίνητον ἢ νοητὴν φύσιν, λέγουσι. Lib. de Placitis Philos. 4. c. 2. p. 898.

place.

place. And that the Ancients did believe God to be a Spirit, or a moſt Powerful, Intelligent, and Perfect Immaterial Subſtance will yet farther appear, if we conſider what Notion they had of, and how they defined *Matter* or *Body*. *Plato* deſcribes it by the words προσβολὴ ἢ ἁφὴ, that which thruſts againſt other Bodies, and reſiſts their Touch or Impulſe. Others call it τόπου πληρωτικὸν, that which ſo fills up a place, as, at that time, to exclude from it any other Body. Sometimes they called it the τὸ πάσχον, in contradiſtinction to the τὸ ποιῶν, or the τὸ ὅθεν ἡ κίνησις. That is, they diſtinguiſhed it to be of a *pure paſſive Nature*, and which was acted and determined only by Impulſe from without it, or diſtinct from it; they knew very well that there was alſo beſides it, ſome *Active Thing*, ſomething that was *the Cauſe of Motion* and *Action* in the Univerſe. For, as *Plutarch* well obſerves, ἡ δύναλαι ἢ ἡ ὕλη εἰ ἐνέργεια, ἐὰν μὴ τὸ ποιῶν προσκέηλαι. (*a*) *'Tis impoſſible Matter alone can produce any thing, unleſs there be beſides it ſome Active Cauſe.* *Sextus Empiricus* alſo gives this Definition of Matter or Body (*b*). *That it is that which reſiſts other things which are brought againſt it; for Reſiſtance*, ſaith he, or Impenetrability, *is the true Property of Body.* By theſe Accounts that they have given us of Matter or Body, 'tis very eaſie to underſtand their Notion or Idea of it; which, indeed, was the Juſt and True one. They thought Matter or Body to be a purely Paſſive Thing, incapable of moving or acting by it ſelf; but wholly determined either by ſome Internal and Self-moving Mind, or by the Motions and Impulſes of other Bodies without it: That it was διαστατὸν ἀντίτυπον, that is, as we now adays

(*a*) De Placitis Philoſ. Lib. 1. c. 3.

(*b*) ἀντιτυπὲς ἢ τοῖς εἰς αὐτὸ φερομένοις σῶμα ἐστὶν, ἰδιωμα δὲ σώματος τὸ ἀντιτυπεῖν. Adv. Math. p. 32.

adays ſpeak, *Impenetrably extended,* and did ſo fill up ſpace or place, as to exclude any other Body from being in the ſame Place with it at the ſame Time: If to this you add what *Ariſtotle,* and ſome others, ſaid of it, that it was alſo capable of all Forms, Figures and Modifications, you have then the whole that ever they thought Matter could do or be. Now from hence 'tis exceeding clear that they could not, as indeed we find actually they did not, think Matter or Body the only Subſtance in the World; and that the Deity was Material or Corporeal. For they always deſcribed the Divine Nature by Attributes and Properties that were the very Reverſes of what they appropriated to Matter or Body. God, they have told us, is an Intelligent Mind, pervading and encompaſſing all things; an Active Energetical Principle; the Cauſe of all Motion and Operation whatever; Intangible, indiviſible, inviſible, and no ways the Object of our Bodily Senſes; But yet whoſe Eſſence is plainly diſcoverable by our reaſoning and Underſtanding Faculty. This was, as we have ſeen, the Notion or Idea that many of the Ancient Philoſophers had of the Deity; and this plainly ſhews us, that they look'd upon him to be what St. *John* here defines him, an Incorporeal Being, or a Spirit. There were indeed ſome even then, as I have before ſhewed, who being wholly immerſed in Matter themſelves, did aſſert that there was nothing elſe but Body in the World. Such were *Leucippus* and *Democritus*; and afterwards *Epicurus* and his Sect, who perverted the Ancient Atomical and true Philoſophy to an Atheiſtical Senſe, and made uſe of it for the baniſhing the Notion and Belief of a God out of their own and

others

others Minds: as, indeed, some others long before them had attempted to do (*a*). But in this, 'tis very plain (as (*b*) an Excellent Person of our Nation hath observed) that these Men did not understand the Philosophy they pretended to: For it doth most clearly follow from the Principles of the True Atomical or Corpuscular Philosophy, that there must be some other Substance, distinct from, and more Noble than Matter; and which is of an Immaterial, Incorporeal or Spiritual Nature. And this, I hope, it will not be judged impertinent briefly to prove at this Time; because some, who seem not so throughly to understand it, have of late reckoned the Mechanical Philosophy among the Causes of the growth of Atheism and Infidelity. It is very much to the Purpose, that the Ancient Atomists before *Democritus* and *Leucippus*, did plainly assert and maintain the Doctrine of Incorporeal Substances, and that the Deity was also of that Nature himself, as I think I have sufficiently proved in this Discourse; and therefore those confident Modern Writers, who say that the *Ancients never had any Notion of an Immaterial Being*, betray equally their Ignorance with their Assurance: for the Doctrine of Immaterial Substances was as well the *Concomitant*, as indeed it is the *Necessary result* of this kind of Philosophy. The Embracers of it, found plainly that they had a clear and distinct Idea of two Things, *viz. Passive Matter*, and *Active Power*; and these they found were perfectly distinct from each other, and no way dependent at all upon each other. To the *former* of these, they only attributed extension and impenetrability, and a Power of being variously figured, modified, disposed and

(*a*) Τῶν δὴ πρώτων φιλοσοφησάντων οἱ πλέονες τὰς ἐν ὕλης εἴδει μόνον ὡρίσαντο ἀρχάς. *Arist.* Metaph. l. 1. c. 3. p. 842. *Paris.*

(*b*) Dr. *Cudw.* in his *Intellectual Syst. of the Universe.*

and moved. To the *latter*, they aſcribed Cogitation, Life, Senſation, and the Power of Motion, which they plainly ſaw did belong to *this*, and could not do ſo to the *other*. And *theſe Two*, they made the Two Great Principles or General Heads of Being in the Univerſe, and called them by two vaſtly different Names, as I have before ſhewed, *viz.* the τὸ πασχὸν, and the τὸ ποιῶν. The one *Paſſive Matter* or *Bulk*, and the other *Self-Activity*, or *Life*. In the former of theſe, *viz. Paſſive Matter*; they found that there was nothing Real, beſides its Bulk, or impenetrably extended Parts: and that conſequently all *Forms* and *Qualities* in Bodies were no real Entities diſtinct from the Body in which they inhered, but only the Parts of the Body differently modified, diſpoſed and agitated, and therefore they held, that when any Body received a new Form or Quality differing from what it had before, there was no new Entity produced, any more than an old one deſtroyed; for that they look't upon to be perfectly Impoſſible: And this was the true Ground of that Fundamental Axiom of theirs, *That Nothing could be made or produced out of Nothing*; which they did not (as the Modern Atheiſts do) advance at all in Oppoſition to a Creative and Almighty Power's producing all things at firſt from Nothing; but purely againſt the producibleneſs of real Entities out of Nothing, in an Uſual and Natural way: which thoſe that aſſert Forms and Qualities to be Subſtantial and Real Beings, muſt needs grant to be daily done. But it was this, and this only, that that Axiom was levelled againſt. And hence it was that they aſſerted the Deity and the Souls of Men to be

real Entities diſtinct from Matter, and not to be producible out of the Power of Matter; as all Qualities which are nothing but Modes of it, they maintained, were: and this made them perhaps have recourſe to the προϋπαρξις and μετενσωματωσις, the *Præ-exiſtence* and *Tranſmigration* of Souls; for they could never believe their Souls were, as one expreſſes it, *younger than their Bodies*, and that they periſhed, when the Bodies died. And therefore nothing can be plainer, than that the very Principles of this Philoſophy did lead Men to the Acknowledgment of Incorporeal Subſtances, and forced them to believe Life, Motion, and Cogitation to be things that could not be Modifications of Matter, nor periſhable and producible, as the common Qualities and Forms of Body or extended Bulk are. And thus when it is rightly conſidered and throughly underſtood, the Atomical or Mechanical Philoſophy is ſo far from being any way inſtrumental to the leading Men into Atheiſm, that there is none other that doth ſo truly diſtinguiſh between Matter and Incorporeal Beings; none that renders the Operations and Qualities of Bodies ſo Intelligible, and none that prepares ſo clear, natural, and eaſie a way for the Demonſtration of Immaterial Subſtances, as this kind of Philoſophy doth. Indeed, as almoſt all things are, ſo *This* is capable of, and hath been made uſe of to ill Purpoſes by its Atheiſtical Votaries; who did anciently, as they do now, aſſert that Cogitation, Life, Senſation, and Active Power, were all producible out of bare Matter without a Deity. But as this was what the True Atomiſts never could think poſſible; ſo it is really involved with the moſt monſtrous Abſurdities that ever any Opinion

nion was : and which therefore ought not to be charged on the Philoſophy it ſelf, but only on that Dark, Unintelligible and Inconſiſtent Syſtem of it, which the Ignorant Atheiſts have Compiled ; and that only to render it ſubſervient to their wicked Deſigns of excluding the Idea's of God and of Incorporeal Subſtances out of the World. Tho' (God be thanked) they do in this Point ſo far fail of Succeſs, that nothing can be clearer than that 'tis utterly impoſſible to account for any firſt Cauſe of things, for Cogitation, Life, Senſation, or Motion, according to their Principle, that there is no other Subſtance but Body : And this neceſſarily leads me to another very good Argument, for the Neceſſity of allowing Incorporeal Subſtances, and to prove that God himſelf is of that Nature, or a Spirit, *viz. The ſtrange Abſurdities of the contrary Opinion.*

But theſe being very many, and it being of great moment truly to clear up this Point, in an Age wherein Men are ſo fond of Corporealiſm. I ſhall deferr this till my next Diſcourſe : wherein I ſhall finiſh this and my remaining Arguments to *Prove God to be a Spirit*, and that there are Beings of an Immaterial and Incorporeal Nature.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

THE
Fifth Sermon.

JOHN iv. 24.
God is a Spirit. ——

I Have already ſhewn the Meaning and Import of theſe Words, and what we underſtand by *God's being a Spirit*. I have ſhewn you alſo the Atheiſt's Objections againſt the Immaterial Nature of God, and the Exiſtence of Incorporeal Subſtances; and have endeavoured to Refute them, from Two Arguments. I have proved,

1. That 'tis a precarious and unfair way of Arguing againſt the Exiſtence of any thing, only becauſe our particular Apprehenſions and Conceptions cannot maſter it: And that it will not follow, That there is no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance, on the Account only of ſome Mens declaring that they cannot conceive how any ſuch thing can be. Where likewiſe I ſhewed, That the Notion of a Spirit, or an Immaterial Subſtance, is as Intelligible as that of Body; and that we have as much reaſon to believe the Exiſtence of the former, as of the latter.

2. I

2. I have plainly proved, That the Notion of Incorporeal Subſtances hath all along been believed and received by many Knowing and Judicious Men amongſt the moſt Ancient Writers and Philoſophers; and conſequently that it can neither be Nonſence and Impoſſible, nor of ſo late an Original as the perverted Philoſophy of *Ariſtotle*: both which the Atheiſts are pleaſed to aſſert.

3. I proceed now to ſpeak to a *Third* Argument, To prove the Deity to be of a Spiritual or Immaterial Nature, and that there are Incorporeal Subſtances: And this I ſhall draw from the many and ſtrange Abſurdities of the contrary Opinion, *That there is nothing but Matter in the World.* And if theſe can fully be made to appear, I hope the Doctrine involved with them will alſo appear falſe and precarious; and that the contrary Opinion, of the Real Exiſtence of Incorporeal Beings, will find an eaſie admittance into our Faith. But here I muſt premiſe, as taken for granted, That we are all agreed on the Definition of, or know what we mean by Matter or Body, *viz.* That it is *Subſtance Impenetrably extended*; whereby we diſtinguiſh it from Spirit, which is a Thinking Subſtance without Corporeal Extenſion, or without having *Partes extra Partes.* For if this be not the Notion which our Adverſaries have of it, as well as we; 'Tis in vain to diſpute about it at all. If therefore they have any other Idea of it that is different from this, let them produce it, and make it as clear and Intelligible as this is; for without doing ſo, they do nothing to the purpoſe. And if they have not a clear and diſtinct Idea of Matter or Body, how come they ſo boldly to ſay that Matter and Subſtance

ſtance are all one? how can they diſtinguiſh the Idea's of Body and Spirit ſo plainly, as to be ſure there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal Subſtance, but that it implies a Contradiction? Unleſs they fully know what Matter or Body is, there may be Millions of Varieties and Degrees of Immaterial Subſtances; or there may be no ſuch thing as Body at all, for any thing they can prove to the contrary. The Atheiſt muſt then do one of theſe two things; he muſt either eſtabliſh a new Notion of Matter, that ſhall be ſo intelligible and plain, that all Mankind ſhall as readily acquieſce in it, as they do in the *old* and *common* one, or elſe he muſt reſolve to keep to *That*. The former of theſe he hath not yet done, nor I believe is very ready to do; but when he doth it, 'twill be time enough to conſider it. In the mean while, I will readily join Iſſue with him, on the common and received Notion of Body: And from thence undertake to maintain, That nothing is more abſurd and unaccountable than their Aſſertion, *That there is no other Subſtance but Matter or Body in the World.* For,

Firſt, Had there been nothing elſe but Matter in the World from Eternity (and if there be nothing elſe now, there never was any thing elſe) I cannot poſſibly ſee how theſe Gentlemen can account for Motion, (*a*) or ſhew us how Matter came firſt to be moved. And Matter without Motion ſure could never be God, never be the Cauſe of any thing, nor could it ever produce, act, or do any thing whatever. Before Motion began, Matter could have been nothing but an heavy, lifeleſs Lump of vaſt extended Bulk; which muſt have lain alſo for ever in the ſame dead

(*a*) Νῦς μὲν ἀρχὴ κινήσεως, ſaith *Anaxagoras*. Vid. *Diog. Laert.*

dead and unactive Poſition, if nothing had been ſuperinduced to put it into Motion and Action. And no one ſure can be ſo ſtupid as to call this a Deity! This is as Mr. *Blount* rudely and irreverently expreſſeth himſelf, worſe than to ſuppoſe (*a*) a *Hum-Drum-Deity, chewing of his own Nature; a Droning God, that ſits hoarding up of his Providence from his Creatures.* And this even he can't but acknowledge, *is an Atheiſm no leſs Irrational, than to deny the very Eſſence of a Divine Being.* I hope therefore they will grant, that Matter without Motion cannot be ſuppos'd to be a Deity. And if ſo, then the Divine Nature (whatever it be) muſt be *ſomething diſtinct from, and more Noble than Matter*, and more akin to Motion, than to Matter or Body in general, or to it *quatenus Matter*, as the Schools ſpeak. And indeed, Motion taken in this ſenſe, not for a tranſlation of Body from one place to another, but for the Active Cauſe of Motion, may be very well ſaid to be Incorporeal, or the Deity it ſelf. But how came this Motion into Matter at firſt? and which way did Matter attain this *Divine Activity*, or *God-like Energy*? Here they muſt aſſert one of theſe three things, either, 1. That Motion came into Matter from ſomething without it, and diſtinct from it. Or, 2. That Motion is Eſſential to Matter, and Co-eternal with it. Or, 3. That it came into it afterwards by Chance, or without any Cauſe at all. The Firſt of theſe they will not ſay, I doubt, becauſe it's Truth: but however, if they do, our Controverſie is at an end; for we believe that 'twas a Divine and powerful Mind, perfectly diſtinct from, and more Noble than Matter, who firſt made it, and moved it, and doth ſtill continue

(*a*) *Oracles of Reaſon*, p. 126, 127.

tinue to modifie and diſpoſe it according to his Infinite Wiſdom and Providence.

And one would think no Man can be ſo ſenſeleſs as to maintain the laſt, *viz.* That *Motion came into Matter without any Cauſe at all,* and that it was *Chance* only that firſt produced it; for Chance here ſignifies nothing in reality: And truly, Men that will be ſo ridiculouſly abſurd as to aſſert, that a Body, or Particle of Matter, that is once at reſt, may move by *Chance* only, or may *Chance to move of it ſelf,* though there be nothing to cauſe its Motion, deſerve no ſerious Refutation, but ought to be treated only as we do Fools and Madmen, with ſilent Pity and Compaſſion. And yet ſo very fond are ſome Perſons of any thing that oppoſes Truth, that they will run into the greateſt Abſurdities to maintain it. For a late Corporealiſt is pleas'd to ſay, (*a*) *That Matter can move of it ſelf:* and to ſhew his deep Skill in Philoſophy, he tells us, that *Wind, Fire, and very fine-ſifted ſmall Duſt, are Matter, and yet Self-movers.* And of *Wind* and *Fire,* he profoundly aſſerts, *That they cannot loſe their Motion, or ceaſe Moving, ſo long as they continue to be Wind and Fire.* That is, As long as Wind and Fire are in Motion, they cannot ceaſe to move. This, indeed, is a very deep and important Diſcovery! But yet 'tis what hardly any Man would have publiſh'd in Print, but one that concludes a Body muſt needs move of it ſelf, only becauſe he can't ſee with his Eyes the Cauſe or Origin of its Motion. And yet even this he may often ſee in the caſe of *Fire,* if he will but vouchſafe to obſerve how 'tis uſually kindled. A little Conſideration would have ſatisfied him alſo, that *Winds* may be produced in the Atmoſphere, by

(*a*) *Obſerv.* on Dr. *Bentley's* Serm. *p.* 6, 7.

the Air's being moved ſome way, by Heat, Compreſſion, or ſome other Accidental Cauſe, as well as in an Eolipile, or a Pair of Bellows. And as for his *fine Duſt's riſing up in a Cloud of it ſelf*; had he underſtood that the Agitation of any Fluid will keep the ſmall Particles of any heavier Matter mixed with it from deſcending to the bottom of it, nay, and raiſe them up from thence too; and had he not forgotten that this was the caſe here, (the Air being ſo agitated by the Motion of Sifting) he would not, ſure, have been ſo ſilly as to have brought theſe as Inſtances of Spontaneous Motion in Matter. But however, he is not the firſt that hath been guilty of this Abſurdity. For *Ariſtotle* upbraids ſome, in his time, (*a*) *with introducing Motion into Matter, without any Cauſe*, or without ſuppoſing any Principle whence it ſhould proceed.

(*a*) *Metaph.* l. 1. c. 3.

The Second Point therefore, is, I ſuppoſe, that which our Corporealiſt will adhere to, *viz. That Motion is Eſſential to, and Co-eternal with Matter*; and that either all Matter and Motion taken together, or elſe ſome Fine and Subtile Parts of it are the Deity. But this, if it be throughly conſidered, will appear almoſt as abſurd and unaccountable as that Matter ſhould be moved without any Cauſe at all. For, in the firſt place, 'tis plain, That Motion is *not Eſſentially included in the Idea of Matter*. I can conceive Matter to the full as well, if not better, when it is at reſt, as when it is in Motion. When I look on any Body, or conſider any determinate quantity of Matter, I can conceive that 'tis a Subſtance that is impenetrably extended, diviſible, and moveable; that it fills up ſuch a ſpace, and that it excludes any Body from being there with it at the ſame time, without conceiving it to be in

in Motion at all; much leſs being forced to acknowledge that it *muſt be*, and was *always* in Motion. Whereas certainly, if *Motion* were as *Eſſential* to Matter, as *Impenetrability* and *Extenſion*, 'twere as impoſſible for me to conceive it at reſt, as it is to conceive it without thoſe Qualifications or Properties: But no doubt I have as true an Idea of a Stone or a Bullet, or of any other Body or Part of Matter, when it lies ſtill on the Ground, as I have of it when 'tis projected from a Sling or a Gun. Now if Motion be not Eſſentially included in the Idea or Notion that we have of Matter, how can any one ſuppoſe it as Eſſential to, and Co-eternal with it? This is a Concluſion beyond the power of our Reaſon to make; no one can come to it naturally, and in the ordinary way of Apprehending and Reaſoning; and 'tis much more Unintelligible and Myſterious than a great many other things which they pretend they cannot believe purely on this account.

But ſuppoſing that *Motion be Eſſential to Matter*; it muſt then be ſo to every Particle of it, and that Uniformly alike, or in the ſame Proportion. And if ſo, then every Atom of Matter muſt always retain its Original Degree of Motion or Velocity, and can never poſſibly be deprived of it: For no Accidental Cauſe can any way either encreaſe or diminiſh, promote or hinder the Eſſential Properties of a Being. Thus, for Inſtance, take a Particle of Matter, or any Body whatever, and move it as faſt or as ſlow as you pleaſe, place it where or how you pleaſe, ſeparate it from other Particles or Bodies, or combine it with them; ſtill 'twill retain its Eſſential Properties of *Extenſion* and *Impenetrability*, and they will receive

no *Intenſion* and *Remiſſion* all this while. But now 'tis quite otherwiſe in the caſe of Motion; we find the ſame Body may be brought to move ſometimes faſter, ſometimes ſlower, and ſometimes (to all appearance) be reduced to abſolute reſt; which could never be, if Motion were Eſſential to each Particle of Matter, in ſuch a Determinate Degree of Velocity, and there were (as is now ſuppoſed) Nothing elſe *without* or *diſtinct* from Matter to put it into Motion. For then nothing could ever accelerate or retard its Motion: no one Body could ever move faſter or ſlower than another. But a *Snail* or the *Pigritia* would keep pace with the ſeemingly Inſtantaneous irradiations of Light.

And thus we may ſee plainly, that without ſuppoſing ſome Principle of Motion diſtinct from Matter, Motion could never have come into it, nor have been co-eternal with it.

But allowing them that Motion ſhould get into Matter neither they nor we know how, or that it is Eternal and Eſſential to it: If there be nothing elſe but Matter and Motion in the Univerſe, which way will they account for the Deity? they dare not ſay Matter alone without Motion can be God; and I think there can be nothing more clear, than that Bare Motion in Matter can never make a Deity. For if Motion came into Matter any time after its Exiſtence, the Deity muſt then be produced, and conſequently receive a Beginning; and ſo the Firſt Cauſe of all things muſt be cauſed himſelf after all things, which is contradictory to the Notion of a Deity.

If they ſay that Motion is Co-eternal with, and Eſſential to Matter, and the Deity be Matter thus Eternally

nally moved; then either every Particle of Matter must be essentially God, or else he must be the result of the whole, or of some Parts of Matter combined together. If the former be asserted, there must of necessity be as many Gods as there are Atoms or Physical Monads: for each of them are Individually distinct from each other, and have their separate and peculiar Properties of Impenetrability, Extension and Motion; which in this fine Hypothesis, are the only Perfections of the Divine Nature. But no doubt they will say, that 'tis not any one Particle of Matter that is a God alone, and therefore they cannot be all Deities singly; But *'tis all of them*, or at least a *good convenient Number* of these luckily combined together, out of whom the Deity is composed. Though which of these to stick to, our Corporealists are very much at a loss; *Spinoza* asserting the former, and Mr. *Hobbs* the latter. But I think 'tis no great matter which they adhere to; for both are alike unaccountable and absurd: For if there be not a Divine Nature, and its Perfections, in each single Atom of Matter; will barely combining some, or all of them, together make a Deity of them? Can it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive that barely collecting together a parcel of roving Particles of Matter, such as agitated Dust, or Motes moving up and down in the Sun, will ever unite them into a God? give the Combination Almighty Power, Wisdom, and Goodness? when there was nothing like this before in any of the Atoms themselves? Certainly, Men that can assert such monstrous Opinions as these, do not think as other People do; or, indeed, rather do not think at all. These certainly labour under the Disease mentioned

tioned by *Epictetus*, of ἀπολίθωσις or ἀπονέκρωσις τῆς νοήσεως, (a) a *ſtony Inſenſibility or Deadneſs of Underſtanding*, by which they are beſotted and ſtupified in their Intellectuals; ſo that they can believe and aſſert any thing, if it be ſubſervient to their deſigns, tho' never ſo contradictory to the cleareſt light of Reaſon and Truth.

(a) *Arrian.* Lib. 1. c. 5.

But to go on: Granting to the Corporealiſts that Matter either hath been *always* in Motion, or for what time they pleaſe; allowing its Particles to be *ſmall* or *great*, to *move ſwiftly* or *ſlowly*, and to be *combined* together, or *disjoined* from each other as they think fit. I enquire what all this will ſignifie towards producing of *Cogitation, Wiſdom*, and *Underſtanding?* or to the production of Life, Self Activity, or Spontaneous Power? And yet Theſe are the moſt Great and Noble Things in the World; theſe are the higheſt Perfections of the Divine Nature, and in theſe we place the Eſſence of the Deity.

Now here Matter and Motion is more than ever at a loſs; and I think it demonſtratively certain that it cannot account for theſe things. *Ariſtotle* did very truly find fault with the Corporealiſts of his Time, that they did not, as ours cannot now, aſſign τὸ εὖ ἢ καλῶς αἰτίαν, (b) any Cauſe of well and fit; any Origin of, or Reaſon for that *Wiſdom* and *Regularity*, that *harmonious Relation* and Aptitude of one part of the Creation to another, which is ſo very conſpicuous in all things; ſuppoſing that there is nothing in Nature but Matter and Motion. And it is moſt certainly true, that the Idea which we have of Body doth not neceſſarily include Cogitation in it, nor our Notion of Cogitation include Body: but they are two

(b) Lib. 1. Metaph. c. 3.

two as distinct Idea's as any we have. So far are they from being the same thing, that we cannot possibly conceive Cogitation with Extension. No Man ever conceived a Thought to be so many Inches or Yards *long*; to be *deep*, *thick* or *broad*, to be divisible into two or more Parts, or to have any Kind of Figure or determinate Position or Extension; whereas if whatsoever be unextended, or not Body, be absolutely Nothing, as these Gentlemen assert: Cogitation, Wisdom, Understanding, and Spontaneous Power must be *nothing*: or else they must be *figurate Bodies*; than which nothing can be more absurd. And if we farther examine our own Mind, and consult our own Reason, we shall find that we cannot possibly conceive how thinking, Wisdom, Consciousness, and Spontaneous Power can possibly be the result of Bare Motion of the Parts of Matter. Was there ever any one that seriously believed a Particle of Matter was any Wiser or had any more Understanding for being moved than it was before when it lay still? for let it be never so briskly agitated, is it not still Body? there is no other Idea ariseth from hence, but only that it changeth its place, and is united successively to several parts of space, that it will move such other Particles of Matter as 'tis capable of, and be retarded in its Motion by hitting or striking against them; these, and such like, are all the Ideas that we can have of a Body in Motion; but what is this to *Thought* and *Consciousness*? Did ever any one but a stupid Corporealist imagine that a Particle of Matter by being moved, was made Intelligent? and that its travelling from place to place, made it understand all things in its way? and did any

any one ever think that the Knowledge of ſuch a rambling Atom encreaſed in Proportion to the velocity of its Motion? Yes, doubtleſs! and thus a Bullet diſcharged from the Mouth of a Cannon, ought to be look'd upon as one of the moſt Ingenious Beings in Nature. And hence it will follow, that the more haſt any one makes to tumble over Books, or to ramble over Countries; and the more precipitantly he makes a judgment of Notions or Opinions, the Better Account he can give of Authors and Places; and the more ſolid and ſubſtantial will be his Learning. This, indeed, is the beſt Account that can be given of the fineneſs and quickneſs of Thought, that *ſome Men* ſo much pretend to; for this way *they* may come by a vaſt ſhare of Penetration, and be volatilized far above the dull ſtudious and conſiderate Vulgar: and the Event ſhews that *they* frequently make uſe of the Experiment.

But again; As we cannot poſſibly conceive that the *Motion of one Particle* of Matter *alone*, can give it Knowledge and Underſtanding; ſo neither can we ſuppoſe that a *Body compoſed of many of them*, can acquire any ſuch thing barely on the Account of the Motion or Agitation of its Parts, for Motion only will do no more to the whole, than it did to each one ſingly; and 'tis not conceivable that Three, or Three Millions of Bullets will be any wiſer for being diſcharged together, than if they were all ſhot ſingly in purſuit of Underſtanding. Nor can any happy *Combination* or *Conſtitution* of *Parts* avail any thing in this Caſe, any more than Motion; nor can *that* be effectual to ſuper-induce *Wiſdom* and *Underſtanding* into Matter. The σῶμα λεπτόμερες will be no more a God,

a God, than *Jupiter's Log was among the Frogs*, nor than the moſt *denſe* and *groſs* body in Nature. For after all the various Poſitions, Configurations, and Combinations of Matter, is it not Matter ſtill? will rarefying or ſubtilizing of Matter change its Nature and Eſſential Properties? A Rare Body is nothing but a contexture of fine and ſubtile Particles, which being ſeparated farther aſunder than is uſual, are alſo perhaps more briskly agitated and moved. And pray what is here new? what will this do towards Divinity? will bare *Figure* and *Poſition* of Parts change the Nature of thoſe Parts, and give them Cogitation and Knowledge when they had no ſuch thing ſingly and before? will adding, ſubtracting, multiplying or dividing of Numbers, make them any thing elſe more Noble than what they were before? will not the *Summs*, *Remainders*, *Products*, or *Quotients* be ſtill Figures and Numbers like the firſt Digits, out of which theſe do by Combination or various Poſitions ariſe? and is it not juſt ſo with Matter? will a Particle of it be made any more Wiſe and Intelligent, for being render'd ſmaller than it was before? and hath a little Particle more Senſe than a larger? will Three or Four, or Four Millions of theſe be more ingenious than a Body or Lump that is as big as them all? and will moving a few Atoms a good diſtance from each other, *Separate* them into Knowledge, and *Diſjoin* them into an Underſtanding Power which none of them had before? If Men can ſwallow ſuch things as theſe, and think at this Extravagant and Unaccountable Rate; I fear all good Arguments and ſound Reaſon will be loſt upon them, and they ought to be neglected as downright Stupid or Diſtracted.

And yet theſe, and ſuch like Abſurdities, muſt be the Natural Conſequences of ſuppoſing Matter and Motion alone capable of *thinking*, that Matter can be *rarified* into a Deity, and that Divine and Almighty *Wiſdom*, *Knowledge*, *Goodneſs* and *Power*, are the reſult of *Body luckily diſpoſed and moved*; which yet was the Opinion of *Hobbs*, and is ſtill of many of his Admirers and Followers. For notwithſtanding thoſe Excellent Demonſtrations that many Learned Men (*a*) amongſt us have eſtabliſhed, that Matter and Motion cannot poſſibly produce Cogitation, Conſciouſneſs, Underſtanding and Liberty of Will: There is lately an Ignorant Corporealiſt who aſſerts, *That the Inflamed and glowing Particles of the Blood, called Spirits, tho' they are not in themſelves Sentient and Intelligent, are yet the active Principle of Life and Motion, of Senſe and Underſtanding in Man and Beaſt; and do act the Underſtanding or Brain to apprehend, judge and remember.* Now by this 'tis plain that he ſuppoſes Cogitation, Underſtanding, Conſciouſneſs and Liberty, and all the Faculties of the Soul of Man to be nothing but the reſult of ſome peculiar Motions in a Fitly organized Body. The Animal Spirits he thinks are like the Elaſtick Particles in the Spring of a Watch, tho' they cannot tell what a Clock it is themſelves, yet they can by means of the Spring which they actuate, do that and many other things that the Movement ſhall be fitted for: Or to make uſe of a Compariſon of his own; The Animal Spirits may do as the Wind doth in the Cheſt of an Organ, tho' it can make no Muſick of it ſelf, yet by being communicated ſo as to inſpire the ſeveral Pipes, it may actuate them into a very fine Harmony.

(*a*) Dr. *Cudworth*, Dr. *Bentley*, and others.

(*b*) Obſervations on Dr. *Bentley*'s Sermon, *p.* 10.

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It is not my Buſineſs nor Deſign to diſcourſe *here* of the Soul of Man: but yet I would fain beg theſe Corporealiſts clearly to explain, how *Self-Conſciouſneſs*, *Reflection*, and *Liberty of Action* can poſſibly be accounted for by this Hypotheſis. For this neceſſarily makes Men meer Machines at long run. An Engine is never the more *free* and *conſcious* to its ſelf of its own Operations for being fine and curiouſly contrived: And the wonderful Clock at *Strasburgh* knows no more what it doth, nor is it any more the *Spontaneous Cauſe* of its ſo many and curious Motions, than the Ancient *Clepſydra*, or a modern *Hour-glaſs* knoweth what it is about, when it rudely meaſureth the Duration of any Part of Time. For whatever is performed by meer Matter and Motion muſt needs be neceſſary in every ſtep and degree of its courſe, be the way of acting in the Engine never ſo curious, and never ſo remote from the cogniſance of our Senſes. They know well enough, as I ſhall ſhew below, that there is no poſſible room for freedom of Action, Conſciouſneſs of any Operation, nor for a Cogitative and Reaſoning Power, according to this way of explicating the Operations of the Humane Soul. For in the Animal Spirits they grant there is no ſuch thing; they are only a fiery and briskly agitated Fluid, which ſerves to actuate any Part of the Rational Machine *pro re natâ*: And theſe ſeveral Parts or Organs of the Machine can no more produce any ſuch thing without the Animal Spirits, than the Hand or Dial-Plate of a Watch can, or any other Part of a curious Inſtrument. If therefore you enquire of them, wherein they place this Cogitation, Self-Conſciouſneſs and Liberty; they will tell you *'tis in the*

Man, 'tis in the whole; 'tis neither his *Soul* alone, nor his *Body* alone; 'tis no Spiritual Subſtance diſtinct from Matter, but 'tis the whole Man that thinks, reaſons, and acts freely by the form of the whole: But this is very unaccountable, and is what neither they nor any one elſe, I believe, can ever apprehend or conceive; that *Liberty* ſhould be the reſult of *Neceſſarily moved Matter*; that *Cogitation* ſhould ariſe from *Senſeleſs and Unthinking Atoms*, and that *Knowledge* and *Conſciouſneſs* of its own Operations ſhould come into any Engine by its being finely and curiouſly contrived, and be nothing but the neceſſary reſult of bare local Motion, and rightly Organized Matter.

Theſe Abſurdities ſome other Corporealiſts clearly perceiving, and being fully convinced that 'tis impoſſible to account for Cogitation, Conſciouſneſs, and the like, from bare Matter and Motion; and to educe the Perfections of the Deity out of the Power of Matter only. Theſe, I ſay, had recourſe to another way of maintaining their beloved Aſſertion, *that there is no other Subſtance but Body.* They aſſert, *that Cogitation is Eſſential to Matter:* or, as *Spinoza* words it, *All Subſtance is eſſentially Cogitative and Extended*; ſo that as there is no Subſtance but what is *Material*, ſo there is none but what is *Cogitative* too. Indeed, as I ſhewed you before, he aſſerts that there is but *One only Subſtance*, which *is God*, or in other words, *Univerſal Matter*; and Cogitation and Extenſion (he ſaith) *are the two Infinite Attributes, or elſe the Affections of the Attributes of the Deity* (*a*). And this, with a great deal of Aſſurance (as the way of theſe Writers is) he pretends to demonſtrate Mathematically, by a Pompous, tho' a very Obſcure, *Apparatus* of *Definitions*, *Axioms*, *Poſtulates*

(*a*) *Op. Poſthum.* p. 12. & 14.

ſtulates and *Propoſitions*. But it is not *calling* a thing a Demonſtration, that will make it to *be* ſo; nor concluding with *Quod erat Demonſtrandum*, that will make every body acquieſce in a Propoſition, when it is either perfectly unintelligible or falſe. And yet ſuch are thoſe that *Spinoza* brings to prove and ſupport this ſtrange Opinion. The Monſtrous Abſurdities of which, I ſhall now conſider.

And Firſt, 'Tis plain, That if Cogitation be as Eſſential to Matter as Extenſion; Then all and every Particle of it muſt needs be a *Thinking Subſtance or Body* by it ſelf, *Diſtinct* from all Other Particles of Matter in the World. There is no one doubts but 'tis ſo, in reference to the proper and allowed Affections of Body, *Impenetrability* and *Extenſion*. Every leaſt Particle or Atom of Matter hath *theſe* Properties as compleat within it ſelf, as they are in the whole Bulk of the Univerſe, or in any larger Body whatſoever: Theſe are alſo individually diſtinct in each Particle; ſo that its Properties, though of the ſame kind, are not the very ſame with thoſe of other Parts of Matter. Now if to each ſuch Particle of Matter Cogitation be alſo added; then every Atom in the Univerſe will be a Thinking, Intelligent and Reaſoning Being, diſtinct from all the reſt, and have its own proper and peculiar Faculties and Operations; 'twill be a *different Perſon* from all Others; and every Individual Particle of Matter will be *ſo* from it, and from every one elſe in the World. Every Atom alſo will be equal to any of the reſt, in reſpect of this *Cogitative Power*; will have it in the very ſame Proportion, and not be wiſer or more fooliſh, duller or more ingenious than its neighbours. And if this be

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ſo (as it muſt neceſſarily be, if all Matter be Eſſentially Cogitative) then there muſt either be no God at all, or elſe every Particle of Matter muſt be a diſtinct God by it ſelf; and ſo the moſt ridiculous Polytheiſm that ever was imagin'd, muſt be introduced and allowed of. For if there be any ſuch things as *Perfect Knowledge*, *Power*, *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, *every one* of theſe Particles muſt *have* it: For 'tis impoſſible *Infinite* or Perfect Power, Wiſdom, Knowledge and Goodneſs, can be produced out of *finite*; the leſſer can never produce the greater, nor any thing make or give that which it hath not within it ſelf: And therefore it plainly follows, that either there is no Deity at all, or elſe that every Particle of Matter muſt be a God by it ſelf, according to this Hypotheſis. For finite or imperfect Cogitation can no more be the Cauſe of Infinite, than *Cogitation* can ariſe from incogitative Matter. And this *Spinoza* ſaw very well; and therefore he aſſerts *all Cogitation*, as well as *all Subſtance*, to be *Infinite* (*a*). Indeed, to avoid this abominable Abſurdity of *each Particle of Matter's being God by it ſelf*; he ſaith, that there is *but one only Subſtance in Nature, and that this is God* (*b*.) But this will not help him out, nor do him much ſervice in defending him from the horrid Abſurdities of this Notion. For if by *Subſtance*, he mean only *Subſtance* in general, or the Idea that we have of ſome *Subſtratum*, *Support* or *Subject of Inheſion* in which we conceive the Properties and Accidents of Real Beings to inhere; as by his Definition of *Subſtance* he ſeems to imply; 'Tis plain, this is only a *Metaphyſical* Notion, only a general *Word* or *Term* that ſerves to denote our conception of ſomething in a Being that doth not *depend*

(*a*) *Op. Poſt.* p. 21. 6. 4, 5.

(*b*) Ib. p. 12.

depend upon the Properties of *it*, nor inhere in *them*, but *they* upon and in *it*. But we can have no Notion of *Subſtance exiſting without any Properties*, any more than of *Properties* without *it*. If therefore he mean that God is ſuch a Subſtance as this, that God is the *Term or Idea of Subſtance* in general, he makes the Deity nothing at all but a meer Name, a meer *Ens Rationis*, or Creature of the Brain only; than which nothing can be more ridiculous and fooliſh. For 'tis the *Attributes* or *Properties* of the Deity that we chiefly contend for, and which we are chiefly obliged to Acknowledge and Reverence; and 'tis *Theſe* that we aſſert muſt be *inherent in an Infinite and Immaterial Subſtance, or Spirit*. But if by there being *but one only Subſtance*, which he ſaith is God, *Spinoza* means, that the Deity is the whole Maſs of Beings or of Matter in the Univerſe, as by what he delivers in many places, I do really believe that he did; for he aſſerts, that *all Corporeal Subſtance is Infinite and One* (*c*); and that *Extenſion* and *Cogitation* are the *Attributes*, or the *Affections of the Attributes of God*, as I hinted before. I ſay, if this be his Opinion, there cannot poſſibly be a more unaccountable, abſurd and impoſſible Notion of God advanced. And 'tis alſo abſolutely inconſiſtent and contradictious with what he doth at other times aſſert. For if *Subſtance, Matter*, and *God*, ſignifie all the ſame thing, and all Matter be *Eſſentially Cogitative*, as ſuch; Then 'tis plain, as I have ſhewed already, that God cannot be the whole Matter of the Univerſe, but each Particle of Matter will be a God by it ſelf. For if there be any ſuch thing as Infinite Perfection, it muſt be Eſſentially in every Particle of Matter; otherwiſe Infinite Perfection may

(*c*) Ib. p. 14.

may ariſe out of what is only Finite, which is impoſſible. And if every Particle of Matter have this Infinite Perfection, the whole Maſs of theſe, Collectively conſidered, will be by no means *One God*, or *One Being*, *Infinitely Perfect*, but a Swarm of Innumerable Deities, every one of which will be Perſonally diſtinct from each other, and yet contain all poſſible Perfection in it ſelf. But allowing him all the Collective Maſs of Beings, or the Univerſe to be God; What a ſtrange kind of a Deity would this make? The Divine Nature muſt then neceſſarily be *Diviſible*, *part of it here*, and *part there*; part of it in *Motion*, and part of it at *Reſt*; part of it *Hot*, and part *Cold*; part *Fire*, and part *Water*; and, in a word, ſubject to all manner of *Imperfections*, *Viciſſitudes*, *Changes*, *Contrarieties* and *Alterations* that can be imagined. But this the common Senſe of all Mankind will abhorr and deteſt to be ſpoken of the Deity: and beſides, 'tis contrary to what *Spinoza* aſſerts in other places, where he ſaith Subſtance is *Indiviſible* (*d*). But how there can be *but One Only Subſtance*, and *that* the Matter of the Univerſe; and how this Subſtance can be *Indiviſible*, when yet each Particle of Matter muſt be a diſtinct Subſtance by it ſelf, and is *diviſible*, and divided from all others, as our Reaſon and our Senſes do every day inform us, is a flight of Metaphyſicks above my Underſtanding, and can, I believe, never be conceived by any one that underſtands the meaning of the Words or Terms ſuch an Opinion ſhall be delivered in. But he indeed that doth not, and that will admire lofty and inſignificant Sounds, without Senſe, or he that hath ſome wicked and baſe Deſign to cover under ſuch Cant, may conceive any thing, or at leaſt ſay that he doth ſo. The

(*d*) Ib. p. 11.

The Operations and Actions alſo of a Corporeal Deity (were it poſſible there ſhould be ſuch an one) muſt be all abſolutely Neceſſary, and determined by pure Phyſical and Mechanical Fatality. For he would be really and truly *Natura Naturata*, only the bare Reſult of Motion in Matter, as 'tis variouſly formed, figured, moved and diſpoſed ſo as to produce any Natural Effect. And this, I doubt not but ſome of theſe Corporealiſts very well underſtand; and that is the reaſon that makes them ſo very fond of the Notion of a Corporeal Deity, and of aſſerting, That there is nothing in the World but Body: For then they know very well, that there can be nothing but ὕλικὴ ἀνάγκη in Nature, ſuch a Phyſical Neceſſity as will perfectly exclude all Freedom and Liberty of Will amongſt Men, and conſequently deſtroy all Notions of, and Diſtinctions between Good and Evil. They don't care to ſay plainly there is no God, that looks a little too bare-faced: for *Atheiſm* is a Name they don't love to take. But they will readily and ſtudiouſly endeavour to advance ſuch an Account and Notion of a Deity as ſhall do as well; ſuch an one as they know is in effect the ſame as to ſay there is no God at all. And this the repreſenting him as *Corporeal*, will effectually do; for this ſubjects Him to a Phyſical Neceſſity, makes Him nothing at all but Nature, and deprives both Him and us of the Noble Principle of *Freedom of Will*: and then they know that there can be no ſuch things as Rewards and Puniſhments proportionate to Mens Actions; but that all things are alike, without any diſtinction of Good and Evil, and conſequently that they may do any thing that they have a mind to. And this appears to be the Iſſue that

they would willingly bring all things to; For if this were not the caſe, what Reaſon can be given why Men ſhould be ſuch zealous Sticklers for a *Corporeal Deity?* Why ſhould they ſtill, in ſpite of Senſe, Reaſon and Philoſophy, maintain, That there can be no ſuch thing as an Incorporeal or *Immaterial Subſtance?* Is it purely out of a devout and holy Deſire to underſtand the Divine Nature more clearly, in order to ſpeak of him more properly, to adore him more religiouſly, and obey him more heartily? I fear, not: For if Matter and Motion can Think, and (as they ſay) the Properties or Attributes of God can be accountable that way, and there be really and truly a Wiſe, Powerful, Juſt and Good God, though Corporeal; why ſhould not theſe Gentlemen look upon themſelves obliged to obey ſuch a God, as well as a Spiritual one? Why do they quarrel with, and caſt off his Holy Word, and reject and deſpiſe his Revealed Will? Is not a Corporeal Deity (according to their Notion) truly a Being endowed with all poſſible Perfections. Is not He the Firſt Cauſe, Maker and Preſerver of all Things? and conſequently is not He as fit and worthy to be worſhipped as well as a Spiritual One? and cannot ſuch a Deity acquaint his Creatures how he will be worſhipped and ſerved? cannot He Reward them for ſo doing, and Puniſh them for offending againſt Him, equally as if He were Incorporeal? If he cannot, indeed, then there is ſomething more than bare Speculation in the caſe, and there muſt be ſome ſubſtantial Reaſon why *Deiſts* and *Antiſcripturiſts* are always Corporealiſts. And this is the truth of the Matter; the God of the Corporealiſts is not the True Deity, whatever they

they may pretend, but a blind, ſtupid, ſenſeleſs Idol, that hath nothing but the Name of God wickedly applied to it. 'Tis only *Nature* or a *Plaſtick Power* in Nature, the whole maſs of, or ſome fine, ſubtile and active Parts of Matter in rapid Motion, without any *Underſtanding*, (*a*) *Wiſdom*, or *Deſign*, *without liberty of Will* or *freedom of Action*; but Phyſically and Mechanically Neceſſary in all its Operations. Their God is ἀδάλῳ ἀνάγκης, and ἀδυνατόν ἐστι τὸν πεπρωμένον ἀποφυγέειν καὶ τῷ Θεῷ, as *Herodotus* ſpeaks, he is the *Servant of Neceſſity*, and *cannot poſſibly himſelf avoid the deſtined fate*. And to be ſure, if God be not a free Agent, Nothing elſe can: for all things *flowing from him by an inevitable Neceſſity* (*b*), or being *Parts of Him*, as *Spinoza* aſſerts, they muſt be under the ſame Neceſſity with the Deity, and he ſaith plainly, That *every thing that is determined to Operate, is ſo determined neceſſarily by God, and could not act at all if God did not thus neceſſarily determine it* (*c*). *That the Will of Man cannot be called free, but is only a neceſſary Cauſe* (*d*). And in another place (*e*) he tells us plainly, *that there are no ſuch things as final Cauſes in Nature, they being only the Ignorant Figments of Mankind; but that all things are Governed by Abſolute Neceſſity*. A while after this, (*f*) *he aſſerts Man to be a meer Machine*, and ſaith, that *'tis only thoſe who are Ignorant of Cauſes that ſay he was thus finely formed by any Art or Deſign*; or who attribute his *Compoſition to any Supernatural Wiſdom*. And then at laſt he comes to the *great Point* on which all this Philoſophy turns; which is, *That Good and Evil*

(*a*) *Quando attribuimus Deo ſenſus, Scientiam & Intellectum, quæ in nobis nihil aliud ſunt quàm ſuſcitatus à rebus externis organa prementibus animi Tumultus, non eſt putandum aliquid tale accidere Deo.* *Hobbs* de Civ. c. xv. §. 14. p. 271. The ſame thing he ſaith alſo, *Leviath.* c. 31. p. 190.

(*b*) *Omnia Inevitabili neceſſitate ex Dei Naturâ ſequi ſtatuo.* *Op. Poſt.* P. 453. *Vid. etiam*, P. 24. 18. 25, &c.

(*c*) *Op. Poſt.* p. 24.

(*d*) P. 28.

(*e*) P. 36.

(*f*) P. 37.

are

are not by Nature; *but that the Notions of them came only from Mens miſtaken Opinion, that all things were made for them*; *and who therefore call that Good which is agreeable to their Fancy, and that Evil which is contrary to it.* By which ſhort Connexion of their Opinions, 'tis clear enough why *Spinoza* was a Corporealiſt, as alſo why Mr. *Hobbs* advanced the ſame Notions. And I doubt thoſe that Eſpouſe the ſame Opinions now adays, know too well the Conſequences of them.

But of the Precarioufneſs of theſe Notions, I muſt ſay no more now; deſigning particularly to confute them hereafter, as they are made Objections againſt the Truth, and Obligation of Religion in general.

FINIS.

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A

REFUTATION of the *Objections*

Againſt the

ATTRIBUTES of GOD in general.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,
September the Fifth, 1698.

BEING

The Sixth of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,
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JEREM. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.

PRide and Vain-Glory, are Things which Human Nature is ſtrangely ſubject to; there being ſcarce any one ſo mean, but who judges that he hath ſomething or other that he may juſtly be Proud of, and value himſelf for. But as Pride is Folly in the general, ſo it apparently diſcovers itſelf in this reſpect, That thoſe Men are uſually moſt Vain, who have the leaſt Reaſon to be ſo, and that too in Things that are the leaſt valuable in themſelves. Thus, as the Prophet intimates in the Verſe before the Text, Men frequently glory in Bodily Strength, in Beauty, and Agility, and in the Affluence of external Poſſeſſions: Things which are the meaneſt Appurtenances to our Natures, and which are neither in our Power to get nor keep. Wiſdom indeed, and Judgment, Learning and Parts, Wit and Penetration, and all the Nobler Endowments of our Minds, are things of the greateſt intrinſick Worth and Value, and we have much more reaſon to eſteem our ſelves for them, than for all the Goods of Fortune, or any Bodily Excellencies. But yet, *Let not the wiſe man Glory in his Wiſdom and Knowledge neither*;

tho' as the Targum on the place hints, it were as great as that of *Solomon* himſelf; for we have in reality no juſt ground to value our ſelves for even *this*, when we conſider that the beſt of us have it but in a very ſlender Proportion; and that our higheſt Knowledge is very imperfect and defective. Hence it comes to paſs, or at leaſt ought to do ſo, that the Modeſty and Humility of truly knowing Men encreaſes with their Learning and Experience: Their being raiſed ſomething above the common level, inſtead of leſſening and ſhortening in their Eyes the Statures of other Men, encreaſes their Proſpect of a Boundleſs Field of Knowledge all around them; the more of which they diſcover, the more they find yet undiſcover'd. But he that knows but little, vainly thinks he knows every thing, and judges all is empty and void that is without the Bounds of his ſcanty Horizon.

Another great Vanity there is alſo in Pride, which is, That Men are frequently conceited and Proud of thoſe things, which they have the leaſt ſhare of, and are fond of ſuch Actions as do plainly diſcover their Defects. For uſually thoſe Men are moſt forward to talk of Learning, who are leaſt acquainted with Books; and thoſe make the greateſt Noiſe about, and Pretenſions to Philoſophy, who have the leaſt inſight into Nature. Thoſe who talk moſt of Certainty and Demonſtration have uſually the moſt confuſed Idea's, and the moſt Superficial Notions of things, and are the fartheſt of all Men from true Science. This is apparently ſeen in the Pretenders to Scepticiſm and Infidelity, and in all the Atheiſtical Writers. No Men expreſs themſelves with ſuch an inſupportable Inſolence

Inſolence as theſe *New Lights, theſe Reformers of our Philoſophy and our Politicks*; who yet after all are *Proud knowing nothing*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 1. 21. *But are vain in their imaginations*; *their fooliſh heart is darkened, and profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they become fools. And therefore it is that the wiſdom of God appears as fooliſhneſs* to them, becauſe the *carnal mind ſavoureth not the things that are of God.*

Tho' would Men but ſtudiouſly apply themſelves to conſider of, would they carefully and impartially examine into, and would they but ſeriouſly make uſe of thoſe Means that God hath graciouſly given Mankind, in order to attain a ſufficient Knowledge of his Nature and Perfections; They would then find ſo much Beauty, Wiſdom, Harmony, and Excellency in this inexhauſtible Fund of Knowledge, as would ſufficiently Reward their Pains and Endeavours. And this we may glory in; this Knowledge will be the moſt noble and honourable that our Capacities can attain unto; and in compariſon of which, there is no other Qualification and Excellence in our Natures at all valuable. For here we have an Object the greateſt and moſt perfect that can be, the more we know of which, the more we ſhall exalt and perfect our ſelves. Here are no empty Speculations; no *difficiles Nugæ*, no falſe Lights, nor Phantaſtical Appearances; but 'tis a real and ſubſtantial, an uſeful and practical Knowledge; a Knowledge that doth not only delight us for the preſent, but which brings conſtant and laſting Satisfaction here, and eternal Happineſs hereafter. *Let him* therefore *that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth God, that He is the Lord, who exerciſeth loving kindneſs, judgment*

judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth, for in theſe things do I delight, ſaith the Lord. In which words, there are theſe two Things chiefly conſiderable:

I. A Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
II. An Account of ſome of thoſe Attributes which he exerciſeth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

Under which Two Heads, I ſhall, in purſuance of my general Deſign, endeavour to Anſwer thoſe Objections that Atheiſtical Men have brought againſt the Attributes and Perfections of the Divine Nature.

1. Here is a Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes. *He that glorieth, let him glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth God, that he is the Lord, who exerciſeth loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth.*

'Tis plainly ſuppoſed here, That this Knowledge which we are directed to acquire, is a poſſible Knowledge. God would not command us to underſtand him by his Attributes of Goodneſs, Mercy and Juſtice, which he continually *exerciſeth in the Earth*, if it were impoſſible for us to attain to it: *He would not delight to* do ſuch Works in the World, if nothing of them could be known, nor himſelf by them. But the Pſalmiſt tells us, *the Lord is known by his Works:* And that *the Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work:* And St. *Paul* is expreſs, That *the Inviſible Things of Him are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

And

And indeed, Theſe Attributes of God are what is moſt and beſt known to us, and from the certain Knowledge that we have of theſe, we may be effectually aſſured of the Exiſtence of ſome firſt Cauſe, ſome Supream Being in whom all theſe Attributes and Perfections muſt inhere. The Infinite Nature, indeed, of This Divine Being is Incomprehenſible to our ſhallow and ſcanty Underſtandings, and we cannot by *ſearching find it out*, nor *diſcover the Almighty unto Perfection.* But notwithſtanding we have as certain a Knowledge, and as clear Idea's of his Attributes as we have of any thing in the World. And *Grotius*'s Gloſs on this place is very juſt and proper: God doth not bid Men know him according to his Nature, which exceeds Humane Capacity to do, but according to thoſe Attributes or Properties of his which relate to Mankind, which the Hebrews call *Middôth*, i.e. thoſe Meaſures or Dimenſions of Him which are proportionable to our Underſtandings and Capacities. And ſuch his Attributes are, for we ſee them viſibly exerted in the Works of the Creation, and we find them neceſſarily included in the Notion that we have of the Supream Being, or the Firſt Cauſe of all things; as I have already ſhewed in another Diſcourſe.

But this, ſome are pleaſed to deny; and ſay, That nothing at all can be known of God, but only, that he is: for his Nature is perfectly Incomprehenſible; that we do but diſhonour God, by pretending to Underſtand and to talk about his Attributes; about which we can ſay nothing but only what ſerves to expreſs our Aſtoniſhment, Ignorance, and Ruſticity; and therefore the Civil Magiſtrate ought to determine what

what Attributes ſhall be given to the Deity. This ſeems to be the Senſe of *Vaninus*, and is plainly of Mr. *Hobbs*; and was before them of *Sextus Empiricus*. Which take in their own words:

Non Deum melius Intelligimus quam per ea quæ negamus nos Intelligere, ſaith *Vaninus* (*a*). Again, *Deum nullis tam plenè indicatum intelligimus Vocibus, quàm iis quæ Ignorantiam noſtram prætendunt. We can have*, ſaith *Mr.* Hobbs, *no Conception of the Deity, and conſequently all his Attributes ſignifie only our Inability and Defect of Power to conceive any thing concerning Him, except only this, that there is a God* (*b*). And in another place, ſaith he, *God's Attributes cannot ſignifie what he is, but ought to ſignifie our deſire to honour him; but they that venture to reaſon of his Nature from theſe Attributes of honour, loſing their Underſtanding in the very firſt Attempt, fall from one Inconvenience to another without End and Number, and do only diſcover their Aſtoniſhment and Ruſticity* (*c*). Again, *When Men* (ſaith he) *out of Principles of Natural Reaſon diſpute about the Attributes of God, they do but diſhonour him; for in the Attributes we give to God, we are not to conſider Philoſophical Truth* (*d*). And therefore he concludes, *That thoſe Attributes which the Soveraign Power ſhall ordain in the Worſhip of God, as ſigns of Honour, ought to be taken and uſed for ſuch by Private Men in their Publick Worſhip* (*e*). In which he agrees as he uſeth to do, exactly with *Sextus Empiricus*; *who tells us that the Sceptick is in the right for aſſerting Gods according to the Laws and Cuſtom of his Country; and in paying them that veneration and worſhip which on the ſame account becomes due to them, but*

(*a*) *Amphitheatr. Provid. Ætern.* p. 9.

(*b*) Humane Nature, p. 69.

(*c*) *Leviath.* p. 374.

(*d*) *Leviath.* p. 191.

(*e*) *Leviath.* p. 192.

will not venture to determine any thing Philoſophically about them (a).

Now from theſe Paſſages, I think it appears plain enough, that tho' theſe Men did in words pretend to own and acknowledge a God, yet in Fact they were Atheiſts, and had no true Belief of any ſuch Being. For a Deity without the Attributes of *Underſtanding* and *Wiſdom*, without *Ends* or *Deſign*; none of which Mr. *Hobbs* aſſerts expreſly, *can be in God* (*b*), is a Ridiculous ſtupid Being, an Idol that every rational Agent muſt needs deſpiſe, and which can never be the Object of any one's Adoration, Love, or Obedience. To aſſert therefore that the Attributes of God *are not diſcoverable by Reaſon, nor agreeable to Philoſophical Truth*, but may be *declared to be any* thing which the *Soveraign Power* pleaſes to make them; this is deſignedly to expoſe the Belief and Notion of a Deity, and to render it ſo Precarious, that it can be the Object of no Rational Man's Faith. And this laſt named Writer Treats the Deity after the ſame manner in moſt other Places of his Works; He ſaith, we *muſt not ſay of Him* that he is *Finite*, that *he hath figure Parts or Totality*, that *he is here or there*, that *he moveth or reſteth*, or that *we can conceive or know any thing of him; for all this is to diſhonour him:* And yet to ſay that he is an *Immaterial Subſtance*, that he is *an Infinite and Eternal Spirit*, is, he ſaith, *Nonſenſe*, and *what deſtroys and contradicts it ſelf.* However he is willing to allow the word *Immaterial* or *Spirit* to be uſed towards God, as a *Mark of Honour and Reſpect.*

That is, we may attribute to God what we know to be Nonſenſe and Contradiction, and this is the *Way*

(a) Καλὰ μὲν τὰ πάτρια ἔθη καὶ τὸς νόμους λεγῶν εἶ) Θεὸς· καὶ πᾶν τὸ εἰς τὸ τοιῦτο ἱδρυσκείαν ἢ ἀσεβειαν συλλεγὸν ποιῶν. τὸ ὃσον ὅτι τῇ φιλοσόφῳ ζητήσει μηδὲν πρέπτα δόμενον. Adv. Math. p. 317.

(b) *Leviath.* p. 190.

to *Honour* him; and to ſpeak of him any other way, is to *Diſhonour* Him! Who doth not perceive that it was plainly the Deſign of this Writer to treat of the Deity after ſuch a manner, as ſhould deprive Him of all Knowledge and Care of Humane Affairs, and conſequently, effectually Baniſh out of Mens Minds a juſt Veneration for Him, and Adoration of Him? *Such* Men are the moſt Dangerous and Miſchievous of all others; *Profeſs'd Atheiſts* can do no great Harm; for all Perſons are aware of them, and will juſtly abhor the Writings and Converſation of Men that ſay boldly there is no God. But there are but few ſuch; they have found a way to paſs undiſcovered under a fairer Dreſs and a ſofter Name: They pretend to be true *Deiſts* and *ſincere Cultivators* of Natural Religion; and to have a *moſt Profound Reſpect for the Supream and Almighty Being*: But when this *Profound Reſpect* comes to be throughly examined and duly underſtood, it will appear to be the moſt abominable Abuſe that can be, and a moſt wicked and Blaſphemous Idea of the Deity. For they make him either nothing but *the Soul of the World*, *Univerſal Matter*, or *Natura Naturata*, a God that is an abſolutely neceſſary Agent, without any Rectitude in his Will; without any Knowledge, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Mercy, or Providence over his Works. But let ſuch Perſons take what Names they pleaſe upon themſelves, a little conſideration will ſoon diſcover what they are in reality; and, I hope, give Men a juſt abhorrence of ſuch Notions, tho' never ſo ſpeciouſly put forth.

But let us now proceed to examine what Ground there is from the Nature of the Thing, for Men to advance

advance ſuch wicked Opinions, and to ſhew the weakneſs and precariouſneſs of them. And here it muſt be premiſed and taken for granted, *that there is a God.* This is what the Perſons I am now concerned with, pretend to own, and to acknowledge. Which being ſuppoſed: It appears very plain that we may have if we will, and ſome Perſons, as I have ſhew'd (*a*), have always had, a very clear Notion or Idea of the Attributes and Perfections of ſuch a Being; as alſo that they are *fixed* and *immutable Properties* in the Divine Nature. For by profeſſing to believe a God, they muſt mean, if they mean any thing, *The firſt Cauſe and Author of all Things, and the Governour and Diſpoſer of them; A Divine Being, containing in himſelf all poſſible Perfections; without being ſubject to any manner of Defect.* This I have already hinted at in another place (*b*), and ſhall now more largely prove.

(*a*) Sermon 4*th.* and 5*th.*

(*b*) In my Second Sermon.

So far is it from being true, *that we cannot reaſon of the Nature of God from his Attributes, nor Diſcourſe of thoſe Attributes from our Reaſon*; That this ſeems to be the only proper Way of enquiring into the wonderful Depth of the Divine Perfections. I mean, the only Way we have without Revelation, for I am not now conſidering what God hath farther diſcovered of Himſelf to us by his Word. For tho' the Deity doth abound with Infinite Excellencies and Perfections; yet by the Light of Nature we can diſcover thoſe only, of which he hath given us ſome Impreſſion on our own Natures; and theſe are the Scales and Proportions by which our Reaſon muſt meaſure the Divine Attributes and Perfections. For in order to gain good and true Notions of *theſe*, we ought

to take our Riſe from thoſe Perfections and Excellencies which we find in the Creatures, and eſpecially in our ſelves.

There can be but two Ways of coming to the Knowledge of any thing; by its *Cauſe*, and by its *Effects*. 'Tis impoſſible for us to make uſe of the former of theſe, in Reference to the Deity: For He being himſelf without Cauſe, and the Firſt Cauſe and Original of all Things cannot be known to us this Way. But by the ſecond Way, he very properly may be the Object of our Knowledge, and we ought to apply our ſelves to this Method, in order to underſtand the Attributes of God. For whatever Excellency or Perfection we can any way diſcover in the *Effects* of God in the World, *i. e.* in the Works of the whole Creation; the ſame we cannot but ſuppoſe muſt be in Him, in the higheſt and moſt noble Proportion and Degree; ſince they are all owing to, and derived from Him.

And if we take a ſerious and conſiderate View of the Excellencies and Perfections that are to be found in the Creatures, or the Works of God in the World; we ſhall find that they may be reducible to theſe Four general Heads; *Being or Subſtance*, *Life*, *Senſibility*, and *Reaſon*. All which we find to be in our ſelves, and therefore they are at hand, and ready to aſſiſt our Meditations; and theſe will, if duly conſidered, lead us into a good Way of diſcovering the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. And I doubt not but a great Reaſon why Men have had and advanced wrong Notions of God, hath been becauſe they have had ſuch of themſelves, and of thoſe Perfections that are in our own Natures. Men that do not underſtand that the true Per-

Perfection of Humane Nature conſiſts in Moral Goodneſs, or in an Univerſal agreeableneſs of our Will to the Eternal Laws of Right Reaſon, cannot conceive aright of the Attributes and Perfections of God: For they will be for making *him like themſelves*, guided by vehement Self-love, and inordinate Will, or whatever predominant Paſſions poſſeſs them.

'Twere eaſie to Trace this in the Epicurean Notion of a God diſſolved in Eaſe and Sloth, and who neglects the Government of the World, to enjoy his own private Pleaſures; and in the *Hobbian* one of a Deity not guided by any Eſſential Rectitude of Will, but only by Arbitrary, Lawleſs, and irriſiſtible Power; for both theſe Opinions are exactly agreeable to the Genius and humours of their Authors and Propagators.

But to proceed with our Deduction of the Divine Attributes from the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our ſelves. 1. If in the firſt place we conſider *Being*, and the high Perfections that do belong to it; we ſhall find that they muſt needs be in the Deity, who is the Firſt and Supream Being, and the Cauſe and Author of all others in the World, in the utmoſt Perfection. Now the higheſt Perfections belonging unto Being, we find to be theſe two: 1. That it ſhall have an underivable and neceſſary Exiſtence, *always be*, and never *ceaſe*, *die*, *terminate* or be *extinct*; and, 2. That it be *Great* and *Ample* as to its *Extent*, in oppoſition to *Littleneſs* or *Scantyneſs*, and to being *Limited*, *Circumſcribed*, *Bounded* or *Reſtrained* by any Other Thing.

And if we attribute theſe two Perfections to God, thence will plainly Ariſe his *Eternity*, and his *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*. For what cannot poſſibly ceaſe

ceaſe to be, but hath neceſſary Exiſtence included in its Nature, is *Eternal*. And what cannot be any way *Limited*, *Circumſcribed* or *Reſtrained*, muſt needs be *Boundleſs* and *Immenſe*, and *preſent* every where. And I dare ſay, that theſe Notions of God's *Eternity* and *Immenſity*, do find an eaſie admiſſion into, and are firmly rooted in all conſiderate and unprejudiced Minds; and who are not debauched by Sceptical and Atheiſtical Metaphyſicks. For 'tis impoſſible for any one that thinks at all, to have a Notion of a Deity that can *die*, or *ceaſe to be*; or that is ſo *confined* and *impriſoned* in *any one part of Space*, that he can extend himſelf no farther: No! it muſt be an Epicurean Stupefaction of *Soul*, indeed, that can induce a Man to fancy a *Mortal* or a *Topical God*; one that may be *ſlain*, or *die of old Age*, or be *ſhackled* and *confined* to any one part of the Univerſe, excluſive of the reſt. And tho' a Man cannot find perhaps that he hath an adequate Idea of Eternity; yet that God muſt be without Beginning or End, he will readily allow, as ſoon as he conſiders the Thing; for he will perceive that the Firſt Cauſe of all Things could not be cauſed by any thing elſe, but muſt be Self-exiſtent, and without Beginning: and if nothing could cauſe his Being, nothing can take it away neither, and conſequently he muſt be Everlaſting or Eternal. And of this Attribute the Heathens had a clear Idea and Belief, giving God the Title of Ἀθάναϛος, and Swearing uſually by the *Immortal Gods*. *Tully* ſaith, *Deum niſi Sempiternum Intelligere quî poſſumus?* How can we conceive the Deity any otherwiſe than to be an Eternal Being. And *Ariſtotle* in many places makes Eternity Eſſential to the Idea of God; and particularly, *Lib.* 2. *de Cœlo.* And

And ſo as to *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*, tho' he, indeed, cannot tell the manner how a *Spirit* or *Immaterial Subſtance* permeates Matter, or is preſent to every part of it; yet he will conclude that the Deity muſt ſome how or other actually *fill* and *be preſent with all* things; ſince 'tis impoſſible he ſhould be *excluded* any where, or be in any reſpect *bounded* or *limited*; as 'tis alſo that he ſhould act or operate where he is not. Nor would, I believe, any free and unprejudiced Mind have recourſe either to the Notion of God's being *Univerſal Matter* or *Infinite Space*, in order to ſolve His *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*. For the *former*, he would ſee, neceſſarily makes the Deity materially diviſible, into Parts actually ſeparated from each other; and to be part of him here, and part there; which he could not but think monſtrouſly abſurd and impoſſible: and the *latter* renders God nothing at all, but *Imaginary Room*, *Vacuity* or *Space*, in which Bodies are capable of Moving up and down, or to and fro, without hindrance or impediment from any *Medium*. Which how it ſhould, any more than the former account for the Energetical Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, (the nobleſt Perfections he can have any Idea of) 'twould be as impoſſible for him to conceive, as it is for the Aſſertors of it to prove. The ancient Heathens allowed this Attribute of Immenſity to the Deity, by common conſent. *Tully* tells us, That *Pythagoras* aſſerted, *Deum eſſe animum per Naturam Rerum omnium intentum & comeantem*, *De Nat. Deorum.* And he cites it as the Opinion of *Thales Mileſius*; *Deorum omnia eſſe Plena*, De Legib. lib. 2. which *Virgil* alſo affirms expreſly,--- *Jovis omnia plena.* And again,

Deum

Deum namq; ire per omnes Terras tractuſq; maris, cœlumq; profundum, Georg. lib. 4. And *Seneca* tells us, That God is *ubiq; & omnibus præſto* (*a*). And in another place (*b*), *Quocunq; te flexeris, ibi Deum videbis Occurrentem tibi, nihil ab illo vacat, Opus ſuum ipſe Implet.*

(*a*) *Ep.* 95.
(*b*) *De Benef. lib.* 4.

2. If we conſider *Life*; Another Perfection which we find in our ſelves, we muſt needs conclude that this is in the Deity too, who is the great Author and Fountain of Life, in the higheſt Degree and Proportion imaginable. Now the Perfection of Life ſeems to conſiſt in *Activity*, or an *Energetical Power* to *Act*, or *Operate*; in oppoſition to *Impotence*, *Weakneſs*, or *Inability*. And this Perfection, no one ſure can poſſibly doubt to be in the Deity. For beſides that 'tis impoſſible for us to conceive that Life and Activity in our ſelves can proceed from a Dead and Unactive Principle; our Reaſon muſt needs reject the Notion of an *Inanimate*, and *Impotent* Deity, or of one that is any way defective in Power, as ſoon as it can be propoſed to it. Can we imagine that a Being from whom all Life, Power and Energy is derived, can be without it himſelf? and that he who hath, as *Simplicius* calls it, ὅλη δύναμις, a whole entire or perfect Power, that hath all the Power of Nature at His Command, can be unable to perform whatever is poſſible to be done? that is, whatever is agreeable to, and conſiſtent with, the other Attributes of the Divine Nature? And if ſo, muſt not then ſuch a Being be own'd to be *Almighty* or *Omnipotent*? From whence we ſee another great Attribute doth plainly ariſe. And of this Attribute of the Deity, there was a plain and clear Notion all along among the Heathen Writers

Writers; as appears from *Homer* in many places, who ſpeaking of God, ſays, δύναλαι γὰρ ἅπαντα. The ſame thing alſo we have in the Fragments of *Linus*, long before Him. And in *Callimachus* alſo, in expreſs words. As alſo in *Agatho*, an Ancient Greek Poet cited by *Ariſtotle* in his Ethicks. So in *Virgil* and *Ovid*, you have frequently the Title of *Pater Omnipotens* given to the Deity. And this Attribute of Infinite Power in God, *Epicurus* ſet himſelf with all his might to confute; denying there was any ſuch thing as Infinite Power at all; that thereby (ſays *Lucretius*, lib. 1.) he might take away Religion too.

And from hence alſo his Eternity might be naturally deduced. For we cannot conceive this Life or Activity, this Almighty Power that is in God, can ever ceaſe, decay or determine, any more than it can have had a beginning, and conſequently ſuch a Being muſt *neceſſarily Exiſt*, *be Eternal*, or *Endure* and *Live for Ever*.

3. If we proceed a little higher, and conſider *Senſibility* which is another great Perfection that we find in our ſelves, and ſome other Creatures, we muſt needs Attribute This alſo, and that in the higheſt degree, to the Divine Nature. I take this now in the general, for that Power or Faculty whereby any Being is capable of *taking Pleaſure* or *feeling Pain*. And ſuch a *Senſibility*, or ſomething Analogous to it, we cannot but think God muſt have in the moſt exquiſite Perfection, ſince our *Own*, as well as that of all other Creatures, muſt be derived from Him. And tho', indeed, we ought to think that the Infinite Perfection of his Nature ſecures him from all Poſſibility of feeling Pain, (ſince nothing can contradict his Will, run

counter to his Desires, or frustrate his Expectations) yet we have no reason to suppose the Deity insensible of Pleasure; but may justly conclude from hence, that he is always most perfectly happy. For he contains in Himself all Possible Good and Infinite Excellencies and Perfection, and of this He is most exquisitely sensible, and consequently must eternally be Pleased and delighted with himself in the Enjoyment of his own Infinite Fulness: And this Notion many of the Heathens had of God, that he was a most Happy Being; stiling Him frequently, Ζῶον μακάριον; and πᾶσαν ἔχον μακαριότητα μετ' ἀφθαρσίας.

4. But the Highest Perfection which we can discover in our selves, and in any created Beings whatever, is Reason. And this, no doubt, we ought also to attribute to God in the highest Degree and Perfection. Now the Perfection of Reason seems to consist in these two Things:

1. In *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* in the Understanding Faculty. And,

2. In *Rectitude* or *Righteousness* in the Will.

All which we cannot but suppose the Divine Nature to be perfectly endowed with. And first as to *Knowledge* and *Wisdom*; The *former* of which, implies an Understanding of things as they are in themselves, according to their true Natures and Properties: And the *latter*, a considering of them as to their Relations to, and Dependances upon one another; or in other words, according as they are fit or qualified to be *Ends* or *Means*.

And these must certainly be in God, for the same reason that we have found in Him the other Perfections above-mentioned. To the Deity therefore, from

from this Conſideration, we ought to Attribute *Omniſcience*, and *Infinite*, or *moſt perfect Wiſdom*; for no doubt we ought to conclude, That the Deity both *knows every thing according to its Nature*, and alſo *underſtands its Uſefulneſs and Subſervience to any End*, *Deſign* or *Purpoſe* whatſoever. And therefore it was as ſtupidly or impiouſly ſaid by Mr. *Hobbs*, That there can be *no ſuch thing as Knowledge in God*, and *that he can have no Ends*. For I cannot imagine there can one ſo groſsly Ignorant and Fooliſh be found among Mankind, who doth really believe there can be an *ignorant* or a *fooliſh God*; and who would not abhor ſuch a Poſition as monſtrouſly abſurd and impoſſible. A Man muſt be a long while converſant with *Atheiſtical and Sceptical Philoſophy*, before he can grow ſo dull as not to perceive the force and Power of the Pſalmiſts Logick and reaſoning in *Pſal.* 94. *v.* 8, 9, *&c.* and he muſt be very *Studiouſly brutiſh* and *Learnedly fooliſh*, before he can think *that he that planted the Ear, ſhould not be able to hear himſelf; and that he that formed the Eye ſhould not ſee; and that he that gave and taught all Knowledge to Men ſhould have none himſelf.*

The mighty Reaſon that Mr. *Hobbs* is pleaſed to give, *Why there can be no Underſtanding in God is, becauſe that Faculty being in us nothing but a Tumult of Mind, raiſed by External Things that preſs the Organical Parts of our Bodies (a)*, there can be *no ſuch thing in God.* And in other places, he ſagaciouſly determines, *that 'tis impoſſible to hear without Ears, to ſee without Eyes, and to Underſtand without Brains, none of which God hath*; and therefore muſt be Ignorant and Stupid. But, methinks, 'tis very hardly

(a) *Leviath.* P. 190.

done of Him, to determine the Deity to be *Corporeal*, and yet to aſſign Him none of theſe Material Organs in order to make him an *Intelligent Being*. Why ſhould not the ſame Matter which is able to form the Mechanick Underſtanding of ſo great a Philoſopher, be capable of being modified as Intelligently in the Divine Nature? Muſt the Deity have the worſt and moſt ſtupid Body of All others? Into what abominable Abſurdities will ſuch Principles as theſe lead a Man! or rather into what abominable Impieties and Blaſphemies will Vice and Pride hurry him! He doth *not only think wickedly that the Deity is ſuch an one as himſelf*, but infinitely worſe; *a Corporeal Being that hath leſs and fewer Perfections than a Corporeal Man!* But I muſt not dwell on ſhewing the Deſign of this Writer, having ſufficiently done it already. I ſhall only now add, that I think I have already proved that Matter alone cannot think, know, nor underſtand; and therefore it is not Mens *Brains*, but their *Soul* that hath this Intelligent Power; and no doubt an *Infinite and Immaterial Mind*, needs not any *Material Organs* to convey Knowledge to him, in whom all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge do Inhabit, and from whom they are all derived and do proceed.

And there was, Anciently amongſt the Heathens, a clear belief of the Infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom of God. *Tully* tells us, that *Thales* uſed commonly to ſay, *Deos omnia cernere*, the Gods behold or know all things. And *Seneca* ſaith, *Deo nihil Clauſum eſt; intereſt Animis noſtris, & mediis cogitationibus intervenit.* And as to the Wiſdom of God, *Tully* deduces it after the ſame manner as we now have done, by attributing

attributing the Excellencies of the Creature to the Deity in the Higheſt Perfection. *Sapiens eſt Homo*, ſaith he, *& propterea Deus*; Man hath Wiſdom, and therefore God, from whom the Wiſdom in Man is derived, muſt needs have it himſelf. But again, As we muſt attribute to God Infinite Knowledge and Wiſdom; ſo we muſt *Rectitude of Will* or *Perfect Righteouſneſs* too. And ſince the Rectitude of the Will conſiſts in an exact Conformity of it and all its Affections to the Impartial Rule of Right Reaſon; we cannot but ſuppoſe alſo, that the Will of God is in a moſt exquiſite Conformity to the Dictates of his Unerring Reaſon; and that the Deity doth in every reſpect act exactly agreeable thereunto. And by this means we ſhall find that God muſt be Juſt and Righteous in all his Proceedings, *and that he always executeth Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, and delights in theſe things.* Our Adverſaries, indeed, do aſſert, That there is no ſuch thing *as any diſtinction between Good and Evil, Juſt and Unjuſt, that can be taken from any common Rule, or from the Objects themſelves; but only with Relation to the Perſon that uſeth them; who calls that Good which he loves, and that Evil which he hates (a).* That *God doth every thing by his Irreſiſtible Power*; and that in *that is founded our Obedience to Him, and not in any Principle of Gratitude to him (b) for Benefits which we have received from him.* That *Juſtice is founded in Power, and that whatever is Enacted by a Soveraign Power can't be Unjuſt.* The Groundleſsneſs of which Impious and Dangerous Notions, I ſhall fully ſhew in a ſubſequent Diſcourſe; and therefore ſhall only now obſerve, that this Way of depriving the Deity of theſe moſt excellent

(a) *Leviath.* p. 24, 63, 64. *Spinozæ Oper. Poſth.* p. 37.

(q) *Leviath.* p. 187.

cellent and lovely Attributes of Juſtice and Goodneſs, and making Him to Act only according to the Arbitrary Dictates of Irreſiſtible Power, gives us the Notion of a Devil inſtead of a Deity, of an abſolute Tyrant, inſtead of a righteous Governour of the World; and is directly contrary to the Sober and Conſiderate Sentiments of all Mankind *, in whoſe Minds a plain Diſtinction between *Good* and *Evil* is founded, and who can never be brought without doing great violence to themſelves, to aſſert that the Deity is not guided in all things by the Eternal Rules of Truth and Juſtice, and *that the Judge of all the Earth ſhould not do right.* They ſee the comlineſs and lovelineſs that there is in good and juſt Actions among Men; and therefore cannot ſuppoſe that an Infinite and Almighty Being can do any thing contrary to them; they are ſenſible that Deviations from thoſe Rules proceed only from the Defects and Imperfections that are in our Natures; but that God, who is Ἰκανώτατον ἁπάντων ἢ αὐταρκέστατον, who *poſſeſſeth and ſuſtaineth all things*, cannot make uſe of any indirect Means to procure himſelf Happineſs, or to ſtave off Miſery; ſince the Perfection of his Nature gives him all the *one*, and ſecures him from all the *other*. And they which certainly never believe that God will do any Action, that they do not think ſuitable to be done

* *Plato* calls the Deity Ἰδέα τ' ἀγαθὸν, the very Idea or Eſſence of Good. And herein he ſeems to have followed the *Pythagoreans* and *Timæus Locrus* in particular: Who aſſerts of *Mind*, according to him the firſt Principle of the Univerſe, that it is, τ' ἀγαθὸν φύσιν, of the Nature of Good: And ſaith further, Θεὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι ἀρχὴν τῶν ἀείζων, that they call it God, and the Principle of the beſt things.

Ariſtotle alſo reckons *Moral Goodneſs* among the Perfections of the Divine Nature: And *Plutarch* ſaith, 'tis one of the chiefeſt Excellencies in the Deity; and that on this account it is that Men love and honour Him.

Hierocles *in Carm. Pythagor.* aſſerts the Deity to be *Eſſentially Good*, and not by Accidental or External Motives.

done by a good and juſt Man; But will on juſt Grounds conclude, That whatever Excellence or Perfections they can any way diſcover to be in a *Good* Man, muſt needs be in the higheſt Proportion in God, and conſequently that the Deity muſt be moſt *Righteous, Juſt and Good, and moſt Kind, Merciful and Gracious in all his Dealings with his Creatures.*

And thus we ſee how by conſidering the Excellencies and Perfections which we find in our ſelves, and attributing them in the Higheſt Proportion to that Supream Being the Deity, from whence they muſt all be derived; we may attain to a good and clear Knowledge of the Properties and Attributes of the Divine Nature: We may find them to be ſuch as are agreeable to the plaineſt Reaſon and to Philoſophical Truth: and conſequently conclude, that they can have no ſuch weak and precarious Foundation as the *Order of the Civil Power*, and the *Will* of the *Supream Magiſtrate*.

And were it now my Buſineſs, 'twere very eaſie from hence to ſhew alſo the *True Foundation of Religious Worſhip*; that it doth depend on the Right Apprehenſions and Notions that we have of the Attributes of God; and that our Obedience to Him, is founded in our Gratitude to him for the Benefits which we receive from Him, and conſequently is *our Reaſonable Service.* But the Proof of this will be more proper in another Place.

FINIS.

A

REFUTATION of the *Objections* Againſt MORAL GOOD and EVIL.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*, *October* the Third, 1698.

BEING

The Seventh of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M. A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

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JEREM. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for in theſe things do I delight, ſaith the Lord.

IN theſe Words, as I have already ſhewed, there are theſe two Things conſiderable:

I. A Suppoſition that God is capable of being known to us by his Attributes.
II. An Account of ſome of thoſe Attributes which he exerciſeth in the Earth, and in which he delights.

On the former of theſe, I did, in my laſt Diſcourſe endeavour to remove the Objections againſt the Attributes of God in general, and to ſhew that they are plainly diſcoverable by Reaſon, and agreeable to Philoſophical Truth. As to the Second,

The Attributes of God mentioned here by the Prophet, and which he is ſaid to delight to exerciſe in the Earth.

I think it not neceſſary to diſcourſe particularly of them, having in my laſt Sermon ſhewn how They, as well as all other Excellencies and Perfections which we can diſcover in the Creatures, muſt of neceſſity be in the Divine Nature in the greateſt Perfection;

becauſe they are all derived from Him. But that which I judge will be more proper to be done now, as being agreeable to my Deſign of Anſwering the Atheiſtical Objections in their Natural Order, will be from hence to Remove two Great Barrs to the true Knowledge of God and of his Attributes, which Sceptical and Unbelieving Men have here placed in the Way. For indeed, till this be done, no true Notion of God or of his Perfections can be eſtabliſhed in Mens Minds; nor any Ground fixt whereon to build a Rational Belief of Natural or Revealed Religion, or any kind of Worſhip of the Supream and Almighty Being. And theſe Two great Objections of our Adverſaries are,

1. That there is in reality no ſuch thing as Moral Good and Evil; but that all Actions are in their own Nature indifferent.

2. That all things are determined by Abſolute Fatality: And that God himſelf, and all Creatures whatſoever, are Neceſſary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Nature at all.

Theſe are two of the ſtrongeſt Holds of Atheiſm and Infidelity, which 'tis therefore abſolutely neceſſary to batter down and demoliſh: And theſe do in ſome ſenſe communicate with and run into one another; and indeed the former plainly follows from the latter. But however, they being very frequently made uſe of diſtinctly by the Oppoſers of Religion, and the *former* being maintained by ſome Perſons whom I cannot find do hold the *latter*; I ſhall endeavour to Refute them ſeverally. Beginning with that which I have firſt propoſed; *viz.*

That

That there is in reality no ſuch things as Moral Good and Evil, but that all Actions are in their own Nature purely Indifferent.

And this Poſition our Adverſaries are very expreſs in maintaining, as will ſufficiently appear by their own Words.

The Virtues that Men extoll ſo highly, ſaith Mr. *Blount* (*a*), *are not of equal weight and value in the Balance of Nature; but that it may fare with them, as with Coin made of Copper or Leather: which tho' it may go at a high Rate in one Country by Proclamation; yet will it not do ſo in another, for want of Intrinſick Value.* 'Tis plain enough what he means by this; but how this Aſſertion will agree with his allowing ſome things to be φύσει δίκαια (*b*), Good and Juſt in their own Nature, as he doth in his Account of the Deiſts Religion, let the Admirers of *thoſe Contradictory Oracles of Reaſon*, conſider. But, indeed, 'tis no new or uncommon thing with theſe kind of Men to make Contradictory Propoſitions ſubſervient to their Purpoſes: as they often do in this very Caſe. For when you upbraid them with a Disbelief of Revelation, they will ſay, that 'tis enough for any Man to live up to the Principles of Natural Religion, and *to adhere inviolably to all things*, φύσει δίκαια; for thoſe are things that are Obligatory on all Mankind, and not like Revealed Truths, mere Political and Topical Inſtitutions. Whereas at another time, if you tell them of ſome groſs Immoralities that they are Guilty of, and which are plainly contrary to Reaſon, and to the cleareſt Light of Nature; Then they will anſwer you, That *Good* and *Evil* are only *Thetical things*; which receive their very Eſſence from Human Laws or Cuſtoms

(*a*) *Anima Mund.* in Or. of Reaſon, *p.* 117.

(*b*) Oracles of Reaſon, *p.* 89.

ſtoms only, but that by Nature nothing is either Good or Bad; and that all Actions are alike and Indifferent; ſo hard is it, as an Excellent Perſon obſerves (*a*), *to contradict Truth and Nature, without contradicting ones ſelf.* But to go on,

(*a*) A. Biſh. *Tillotſ.* Serm. Vol. 4. p. 315.

Spinoza takes care to deliver himſelf very plainly, as to this Matter. *Bonum & Malum nihil Poſitivum in Rebus ſc. in ſe conſideratis indicant* (*b*). And in another Place, he tells us, *Poſtquam homines ſibi perſuaſerunt, omnia quæ fiunt, propter ipſos fieri, id in unaquàq; re præcipuum judicare debuerunt, quod ipſis, utiliſſimum; & illa omnia præſtantiſſima æſtimare, à quibus optimè afficiebantur. Unde has formare debuerunt Notiones, quibus Rerum naturas explicarunt,* ſc. Bonum & Malum, *Ordinem & Confuſionem, &c.* (*c*). And the ſame thing alſo he aſſerts in many other places.

(*b*) *Op Poſthum*, p. 164.

(*c*) *Ibid* p. 37. *Vid. etiam*, p. 171, 185, 360, &c.

Mr. *Hobbs* alſo expreſly maintains, That *there is nothing ſimply nor abſolutely Good or Evil, nor any common Rule about them to be taken from the Objects themſelves, but only from the Perſon; who calleth that Good which he likes or deſires, and that Evil which he hates,* &c. (*d*) *Nothing*, ſaith he, *is in its own Nature Juſt or Unjuſt, becauſe naturally there is no Property, but every one hath a Right to every thing* (*e*); And therefore he defines *Juſtice to be only keeping of a Covenant* (*f*). And in another place he tells us, *That Good and Evil are only Names that ſignifie our Appetites and Averſions; which in different Tempers, Cuſtoms and Doctrines of Men are different* (*g*). The ſame thing he aſſerteth alſo in many other places of his Writings (*h*). And this Doctrine the Tranſlator of *Philoſtratus* is ſo fond of, that, tho' he be ſometimes very deſirous of being thought an Original, yet

(*d*) *Leviath.* p. 24.

(*e*) *Ibid.* p. 63, 64.

(*f*) P. 73.

(*g*) *Ibid* p. 79.

(*h*) *Vid. Hum. Nature*, p. 38. *Element. de Cive* c. 1. §. 2.

yet he Tranſcribes this entirely from Mr. *Hobbs* (*a*); as indeed Mr. *Hobbs*, according to his uſual way, had before, in a great meaſure done from *Sextus Empiricus*; who in very many places declares that it was the Opinion of the Scepticks, *that there was nothing Good or Evil in it ſelf* (*b*). And he endeavours to prove this Point, by the very ſame Arguments which the Modern Aſſertors of this Opinion, do make uſe of (*c*).

And tho' Mr. *Hobbs* boaſt much of his Notions about theſe things to be new, and originally his own; yet 'tis plain, that it was the Old Atheiſtick Doctrine long before *Plato*'s Time. For he tells us, *Lib.* 2. *De Rep.* p. 358. That there were a ſort of Men who maintained, That by Nature Men have a boundleſs Liberty to act as they pleaſe, and that in ſuch a ſtate, to do that to another which is now called an *Injury*, or a piece of Injuſtice, would be *Good*; tho' to receive it from another would be *Evil*: And that Men did live a good while at this rate, but in Time finding the Inconveniencies of it, they did agree upon Laws, in order to live peaceably and quietly with one another. And then that which was enacted by theſe Laws, was called Juſt, and Lawful. Ὀνομάσαι τὸ ὑπὸ τῶ νόμω ἐπίταγμα νόμιμόν τε καὶ δίκαιον.

This is the Principle we ſee of thoſe Atheiſtical Men: which tho' ſome of them do now and then take Care to conceal, or to expreſs a little cautiouſly, yet they underſtand one another well enough: and ſo indeed may any one do them, that thinks it worth his while to conſider ſeriouſly of, and to ſearch into the Bottom of the Matter. And this is truly one of the Great Depths of Atheiſm and Infidelity: 'Tis a Principle that when once thoroughly underſtood and imbibed,

(*a*) *Blount's* Life of *Apollonius*, p. 151.

(*b*) ἡμῶν ἀγαθὸν τι ἢ κακὸν εἶναι λεγόντων — *Pyrrh. Hypot.* p. 46. And again, p. 147. ἐκ ἄρα ἔστι φύσει ἀγαθόν.

(*c*) *Vid. Sext. Emp. Adv. Math.* p. 450, 451, &c. 462, 463, &c.

imbibed, confirms a Man in the Disbelief of all manner of Religious Obligation. For he that hath once ſwallowed down this abominable Tenet, will, as ſome of the lately mentioned Writers diſcover themſelves to do, believe nothing of the Deity, but that he is *Almighty and Arbitrary Power*, or a *Blind fatal and Neceſſary Agent:* Either a Being that makes his Will his Law, and who is not guided in his Actions or Diſpenſations, by the Dictates of Reaſon nor by any Rules of Juſtice and Goodneſs: or elſe one that properly ſpeaking, hath *no Ends nor Deſigns* at all (*a*); but is *without any Underſtanding* (*b*), *Freedom of Will*, *Choice* or *Wiſdom*; one who cannot poſſibly help doing as he doth, but is impelled in every thing by abſolute Neceſſity. So that there being (as according to theſe Principles there cannot be) no Goodneſs in the Deity, there can be none any where: But all Actions, antecedent to Human Laws, will be Indifferent. And the Obligation that Men are under to Human Laws being only, as *Hobbs* ſaith, from Fear of Puniſhment; no doubt a Man of this wicked Perſwaſion will ſtick at the Perpetration of no Villany nor Immorality, that will any way advantage himſelf, and which he can commit ſecretly and ſecurely; but will purſue his own Private Benefit and Intereſt (the only Good he underſtands, and thinks himſelf obliged to mind) by all poſſible Means and Endeavours.

(*a*) *Spinoz. Op. Poſthum.* p. 36.
(*b*) *Oſtendam--ad Dei naturam neq; Intellectum neq; Voluntatem pertinere. Ibid.* p. 18. *Vid. Etiam*, p. 29.

This therefore being the Caſe before us, it will very much concern us to Return a fair Anſwer to, and fully to Refute this Dangerous Objection againſt all Religion, and indeed againſt the Good and Welfare of all Governments, and all Civil Societies: and which I wiſh we had not ſo much reaſon to believe, is fixt in the Minds of too many amongſt us. And

And in order to do this the more clearly and effectually, it will be neceſſary firſt truly to ſtate the Point, and to diſ-engage it from ſome Difficulties and Perplexities which our Adverſaries have deſignedly clouded it withall. Say they whatever is the Object of any Man's Deſires that he calls Good; as alſo whatſoever is in any reſpect Beneficial and Advantageous to him. And on the other hand, that which is hurtful and prejudicial to him, and is the Object of his Hatred and Averſion, that he calls Evil, and ſo doubtleſs it is to him. Now, ſay they further, Since that which may be *Good* to one Man, or *deſired* by him *now*, may be *Evil* to another, or may by the very ſame Perſon, be hated and ſhunned at *another Time*; it plainly follows, that the Nature of *Good and Evil*, is perfectly precarious, and will be as various and changeable as the different Humours and Inclinations of Mankind can make it. And thus Mens Actions will be denominated accordingly. Every one accounting that a *Good one* which he likes, which promotes his Intereſt, and is conducible to his Advantage: And calling that an *Evil one*, which he diſapproves of, and which is contrary to his Intereſt and Inclination.

To all which, I ſay, that theſe Men run their Argument a great way too far, and conclude much more from it than the Nature of the thing will bear. For allowing as a firſt Principle *that all Men deſire Good*, and that they cannot do otherwiſe; Allowing alſo that Apparent or ſeeming Good hath the ſame Effect as real Good, while it is the Object of any particular Man's Deſires: Nay, allowing alſo this *Apparent Good* to be a very precarious Thing, and to depend very much on the different Humours, Tempers and Incli-

nations of Mankind; which is the whole Basis on which these Writers found their Argument. I say, Granting all this, it doth not come up to the Question between us, nor form any Real Objection against the natural difference between Good and Evil, and the Eternal Obligation of Morality; for the Point in dispute is not whether such an Essential and Immutable Difference as this now spoken of, be discernible in *all* the Actions of Mankind; for 'tis readily allowed that there are a great many *Indifferent*, and which are neither *good* nor *bad* in their own Natures, but may be *either*, as Circumstances determine. This, I say, is not the Case; but whether there be not *some* such Actions, as do plainly discover themselves to the Unprejudiced Judgment of any Rational Man, to be *Good and Evil* in their own Natures, antecedent to the Obligation of any Human Laws. Or in other Words, whether there be not some Actions which do carry along with them such a clear and unalterable Reasonableness and Excellency, as that they do approve themselves to be Good and Lovely to any Unprejudiced Mind, and consequently Mankind must be under an Universal and Eternal Obligation to perform them, and to avoid and shun their Contraries. As also, whether we have not all the reason in the World to believe that those Actions, which the Mind of Man can thus discover to be Morally and Essentially Good, are agreeable to the Will of God, and directed by it: And to conclude, that the Deity also acts and proceeds in all Respects according to the same Universal and Eternal Dictates of Reason, and is Just and Good, Equitable and Righteous in all his Dealings with his Creatures; and *that he exer-*

ciseth

ciſeth theſe things in the Earth. This I take to be the true ſtate of the Caſe; and this is what we Aſſert, and our Adverſaries Deny; and what I ſhall now endeavour to prove.

In order to which, it muſt be allowed in the

1. Place, That Man is a thinking Being, and hath the Power of Reaſoning and Inference. It muſt be allowed alſo, that we are capable of Knowing this, and do moſt evidently diſcover ſuch a Power in our ſelves. And ſince all Intelligent Creatures do naturally deſire to be happy, we muſt do ſo too, and conſequently endeavour to obtain that Kind of Happineſs which is agreeable to our Natures and Faculties; *i. e.* a Happineſs that ſhall relate to our *whole Natures*, and not to the Body only: Now the Happineſs of any Being conſiſting in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of its Powers and Faculties, or in the Perfection of its Nature; and the Nature of Man being Reaſon, the Happineſs of Mankind muſt conſiſt chiefly in the free and vigorous Exerciſe of his Reaſoning Faculty; or being in ſuch a Condition as that we can do all things that are agreeable to, and avoid all ſuch things as are diſagreeable to it. Now all this ſuppoſed and granted, as I think none of it can be denied, it will plainly follow, that all ſuch Actions as do Univerſally approve themſelves to the Reaſon of Mankind, and ſuch as when duly examined and conſidered, do conſtantly and uniformly tend towards, and promote the Happineſs of Man, conſidered as to his whole Nature, and chiefly as to that part of him in which his Nature doth more properly conſiſt, which is his Rational and Underſtanding Faculty: Such Actions, I ſay, muſt neceſſarily be ſaid to be in their own Na-

ture *Good*; and their Contraries must be denominated *Evil*, after the same manner; for whatsoever is universally *Approved*, is universally *Good*: to call a thing *Good* being nothing else but to declare its conducibility to that end it was designed for. Now according to our Adversary's Assertion, Men call that *Good* which promotes their own Advantage and Happiness, and so no doubt it ought to be esteemed; all that they mistake in, being, that they don't understand wherein their true Happiness consists. And therefore if a Thing doth in its own Nature approve it self to the impartial Reason of Mankind, and can on due Examination manifestly appear to conduce to the Interest, Advantage and Happiness of Human Nature; such a thing must by all Rational and thinking Men be pronounced *naturally and morally Good*; and its Reverse, *Evil* in the same manner. And that this is the case in Reference to that which is commonly called *Moral Good and Evil*, will appear plain and evident when we shew,

2. That there are some Things and Actions which the Free and Unprejudiced Reason of all Mankind, cannot but acknowledge to be *Comely*, *Lovely*, and *Good* in their own Natures as soon as ever it considers them, and makes any Judgment about them. And this is what is apparent to the Observation of all Men to have been *ipso facto* done; and the Truth of it cannot be denied: For have not all Nations in the World agreed in paying some kind of Worship and Veneration to the Deity? Was there ever any Place where, or Time when, *Obedience to Parents*, *Gratitude for Benefits received*, *Acts of Justice*, *Mercy*, *Kindness*, *and Good Nature*, were not accounted reasonable, good

good and decent things? I know ſome Perſons have boldly told the World that 'tis quite otherwiſe, and that there are ſome whole Nations ſo Savage and Barbarous as to have no Notion of any Deity, who have no manner of Religious Worſhip at all, and who have no Notion or Idea of *Moral Good and Evil:* But when we conſider that theſe Accounts come originally only from a few Navigators, who probably did not ſtay long enough at thoſe Places to acquaint themſelves with the Language of the Natives, and who conſequently could not have much Knowledge of their Notions, Opinions, and Cuſtoms; it will be too hardy a Concluſion to inferr poſitively that Men pay no Worſhip to, nor have any Idea of a God, only becauſe they did not ſee them at their Devotions. And moreover, when we have had later and more accurate Accounts of ſome of thoſe Places, which do plainly diſprove the former Aſſertions, we have good reaſon, I think, to ſuſpend our aſſent to them. And then as to their Notions of Good and Evil, it will not follow that they account Stealth and Murder as good and comely things as Juſtice and Mercy, only becauſe theſe Relators had ſome of thoſe Acts committed on them. For commonly they themſelves ſhew them the way, by wickedly Robbing, Impriſoning and Murdering them; and therefore why the Poor *Indians* may not return ſome ſuch Actions upon their Enemies and Invaders, without being ſuppoſed to be quite Ignorant of the Difference between Good and Evil, I confeſs, I do not ſee. And by what too often appears from their own Relations and Books of Travels, the *Indians* have not more reaſon to be thought Savage and Barbarous, than thoſe that

give

give us such an Account of them; for by their Actions they discover as poor Notions of Morality, as 'tis possible for any Men to have.

But after all, suppose the Fact true, as I do really believe it is not, That there is any Nation of Men so Stupid as to be quite devoid of any Notion of a God, or of the Difference between Good and Evil: All that can be concluded from hence is, that some Men may for want of Commerce with other Parts of the World, and for want of Thinking, and cultivating and exercising their Rational Faculties, degenerate into meer brute Beasts; and indeed, as such the Relators describe them; according to whose Account of them, many Species of the Brute Creation discover more Understanding, and Act, if I may so speak, more rationally; but it cannot be fairly argued from hence, that they *never have had* any Notion or Belief of these things; or that their Reasons will not assent to the Truth of them *hereafter*, when their unhappy Prejudices may be removed, and they may become civilized by Commerce. Much less sure will this Prove, that there is no Notion of a Deity, nor of Moral Good and Evil in all the other Parts of the World, and amongst Men that can think, and do exercise their Reason and Understanding. Will not a General Rule stand its Ground tho' there be a few Exceptions against it? Will Men take their Measures to judge of Human Nature only from the Monstrosities of it, from the worst and most stupid Parts of Mankind? Men may as well argue that all Mankind are devoid of Arms or Hands, or are Universally Defective in any other Part of the Body, because some few are daily born so, or rather have them cut off. We see there are often Natural

Natural Defects in Mens Minds as well as their Bodies, and that ſome are born Fools and Idiots, as well as others Blind and Lame; and a great many we ſee make themſelves ſo by their own Fault; But ſure no one will conclude from hence, that all Mankind are Fools and Idiots, unleſs he be a degree worſe than one himſelf. And yet Men may even as juſtly make any of theſe abſurd Inferences, as to ſay, there is in the Minds of Men no Power to diſtinguiſh a Natural Difference between Good and Evil, only becauſe there are ſome Stupid and Barbarous People, among whom no ſuch thing can be diſcovered. For my part, I do moſt heartily believe, that 'tis impoſſible for a Rational and Thinking Mind, acting as ſuch, to be inſenſible of the Difference between Moral Good and Evil: I cannot Imagine that ſuch a Perſon can think it a thing indifferent in its own Nature, whether he ſhould Venerate, Love and Worſhip the God that made him, and from whom he derives all the Good he can poſſibly enjoy; or whether he ſhould Slight, Deſpiſe, Blaſpheme or Affront him. It ſeems utterly impoſſible to me, that any thinking and conſiderate Man, ſhould judge it an indifferent thing in its own Nature, whether he ſhould honour and reverence his Father, or abuſe him and cut his Throat: or that he can eſteem it to be as good and decent a thing to be Ungrateful or Unjuſt, as it is to acknowledge and to return a Kindneſs, to render every one their Due, and to behave our ſelves towards others, as we would have them do towards us.

I do not think that the Inſtances produced by a late Ingenious Writer, of ſome wild People's expoſing their Sick and Aged Parents to die by the Severities of

of Wind and Weather, nor of others who eat their own Children, are of force to prove that there is really and naturally no difference between Good and Evil, any more than I will believe that he cited thoſe Paſſages with a deſign to make the World think ſo; for I think, allowing the truth of all theſe Relations, no ſuch Inference can be thence deduced. A Practical Principle, of the Truth and Power of which a Man may be demonſtratively aſſured, may yet be over-born in ſome Reſpects by other Opinions which Ignorance and Superſtition may have ſet up in a Man's Mind. This Gentleman ſaith, *p.* 25. *Of Human Underſtanding*, That *a Doctrine having no better Original than the Superſtition of a Nurſe, or the Authority of an Old Woman, may by length of time grow up to the dignity of a Principle in Religion or Morality.* Now ſhould a precarious and wicked Opinion over-rule a Man in one or two particular Caſes, and carry him againſt the Rules of Morality, will it follow from thence that a Man doth believe thoſe Rules of no Natural Force, and that it is an Indifferent thing whether he obſerve them or not? Ought I to conclude, that becauſe I have read of a King that Sacrificed his Son to *Moloch*, that therefore he believed it as good and reaſonable a thing to burn his Children alive, as to preſerve, take care of them, and give them a good Education? Certainly, 'twould be a fairer and more reaſonable Inference, to conclude that his Reaſon and Natural Affection was over-power'd by his Idolatrous and Superſtitious Opinion; and that the reaſon why he did ſuch a Wicked and unnatural Action was becauſe he expected ſome very great Benefit for it from the Idol, or that he would Inflict ſome very great Judgment upon him, if

if he did not do it. And ſo in the Caſes above-mentioned, one may well enough believe that thoſe Barbarous and Inhumane Wretches that Starved their Parents and Eat their Children; did not nor could not believe it was as good and reaſonable ſo to do, as it would be to preſerve them; but only that they were under the Power of ſome Wicked Superſtition, or Abominable Cuſtom that had unhappily crept in among them; which they thought it a greater Evil to break (if they thought at all) than they did to Act againſt their Judgment, Natural Reaſon, and Affection. For *this way* (as he obſerves) *'tis eaſie to imagine how Men, may come to worſhip the Idols of their own Minds, grow fond of Notions they have been long acquainted with there, and ſtamp the* Characters *of Divinity upon Abſurdities and Errors*, &c. p. 26. So that I cannot ſee any Conſequence at all, in aſſerting the Non-exiſtence of Moral Good and Evil, from a few Barbarous and Ignorant Wretches doing ſome Actions that bear hard on the Rules of Morality: For notwithſtanding that they may be loſt in a great meaſure in ſome places; yet theſe things, and many others that might be inſtanced in, do certainly carry ſuch Self-evidence along with them; that a free and unprejudiced Mind muſt needs perceive which way to determine, as ſoon as ever they can be propoſed to it, and conſidered of by it. For any one in the World that doth but underſtand the meaning of the Terms in any of the lately mentioned Moral Propoſitions, will be demonſtratively aſſured of the Truth of them: And he will ſee as

clearly *that God is to be worſhipped*, that *Parents are to be honoured*, and in a word, that *we ought to do to others as we would be done unto*, as he aſſents to the Truth of ſuch Axioms as theſe: That *a Thing cannot be and not be, at the ſame Time*; That *Nothing hath no Properties*; And that *the whole is greater than any one, and equal to all its Parts taken together:* For the Reaſon why all Mankind allow theſe as *firſt Principles*, is becauſe their Truth is ſo very Apparent and Evident, that they approve themſelves to our Reaſon at firſt ſight. And ſo, I think, do all theſe Great Principles in Morality; they certainly affect impartial and conſiderate Minds, with as full a Conviction as any of the former can poſſibly do. And would no more have been denied or diſputed than the others are, had they not been *Rules of Practice*, and did they not require ſomething to be *done*, as well as to be *believed*. For he that rightly underſtands what is meant by the words *God*, and *Worſhip*; will ſee the Neceſſary connexion between thoſe Terms, or the Truth of this Propoſition, *God is to be worſhipped*, as evidently as he that knows what a *Whole* and a *Part* is, will ſee that the *Whole muſt be greater than a Part*. And no Propoſition in Geometry can be more demonſtratively clear, than theſe Moral ones are, to Men that are not wilfully Blind and wickedly Prejudiced againſt ſuch Practical Truths. For as one hath well obſerved (*a*), *Morality may be reckoned among thoſe Sciences that are capable of Demonſtration.* And that *theſe Moral Truths have a ſtronger connexion one with another*,

(*a*) Eſſay of Human Underſtand. *p.* 274, 275.

ther, and a more neceſſary Conſequence from our Idea's, and come nearer to a perfect Demonſtration than is commonly imagined; inſomuch, that as he ſaith in another place, *They are capable of real Certainty as well as Mathematicks* (*b*). Now if the caſe be ſo, as moſt certainly it is; it will plainly follow, that Thoſe things that do thus demonſtratively approve themſelves to the unprejudiced Reaſon of all Mankind, muſt be *good* and *lovely* in their own Natures, or Morally ſo, antecedent to the Obligation of Human Laws, Cuſtoms or Faſhions of particular Countries.

(*b*) Pag. 284.

And in this plain Diſtinction between Good and Evil, which our Reaſon, when duly uſed, Impowers us thus at firſt ſight to make, is founded that which we call Conſcience: which is a kind of an Internal Senſation of *Moral Good and Evil.* And *this Candle of the Lord, ſet up by himſelf in mens Minds, and which 'tis impoſſible for the Breath or Power of man wholly to extinguiſh* (*a*); is as Natural to a Rational Mind, as the Senſe of Pain and Pleaſure is to the Body; for as that is given us by the Author of our Natures to preſerve us from bodily Evils, and to capacitate us to enjoy ſuch a Kind of Happineſs; ſo Conſcience is our Guard againſt the Invaſions of Moral or Spiritual Evils; and will, if rightly followed, give us always ſo much Peace, Joy, and Satisfaction of Soul, as cannot poſſibly be had any other way. But again;

(*a*) Eſſay of Hum. Underſtand. *p.* 276.

2. It is moſt plain alſo, That there are ſome things which do Univerſally and Naturally tend to promote the Happineſs and Welfare of Mankind, and

others that do equally contribute to its Misery: And consequently on this Account we must esteem the former to be really and naturally *Good* things, and the latter, *Evil.* Now one would think, that one need not spend Time to prove that the Practice of Moral Virtue, doth Uniformly and Naturally promote the Happiness of Mankind, and that Vice and Immorality do as naturally and necessarily tend to its Misery. For doth not any one plainly perceive, that there is no Virtue, or Part of Morality, but what hath some particular Good and Advantage to Human Nature, connected with it, as all Vice and Wickedness hath the contrary? Doth not a sincere Veneration for that Supream and Almighty Being, from whom all our Powers and Faculties are derived, and a consciousness to our selves that we are obedient to his Will, and consequently under his Protection; doth not this, I say, bring constant Peace, Comfort and Satisfaction along with it? and prove our greatest Support under any Troubles and Afflictions? And on the other hand, hath not generally speaking he that is guilty of Impiety, Profaneness and Irreligion, dismal Doubts and dire Suspicions in his Mind of impending Punishments, and Misery? Is not such a Mans whole course of Action, a continual state of War in his own Breast, and a constant Contradiction of his Reason and his Conscience? What hath such a Person to support him, or to give him any comfort on a Sick or a Death-Bed, when the hurry and amusements of sensual Pleasure are over; and when all the treacherous Enjoyments of this World begin to fail him, and discover themselves

to

to be counterfeit and fictitious? But again, is it not plain to every one, that Truth, Juſtice and Benevolence, do Naturally and Eſſentially conduce to the well being and Happineſs of Mankind, to the mutual ſupport of Society and Commerce, and to the Eaſe, Peace and Quiet of all Governments and Communities? and doth it not as clearly appear on the contrary that breach of Truſts and Compacts, lying and falſifying of Mens Words, Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, and Cruelty, do inevitably render that Place or Society miſerable where they abound? What an unexpreſſible wretchedneſs would Mankind be in, if *Hobbs* his *State of Nature* were in Being amongſt us? *i. e.* a State wherein no Man would have any Notion of Moral Virtue, but where every one ſhould think himſelf to have a *right to all things*, and conſequently be ſtill endeavouring to obtain them; and making it his daily buſineſs to vex, rob, ruin and deſtroy all who oppoſed his Will, and they alſo be doing continually the ſame things againſt Him, and againſt one another. A Man muſt be ſtupidly and wilfully blind before he can aſſert ſuch *a State* as this, to be as happy and advantageous to Mankind, as where all Moral Virtues are obſerved and exerciſed: And therefore Mr. *Hobbs* himſelf is forced to allow that rational Agents would have recourſe to the Enacting of Laws for the due Government and Regulation of Society. But how theſe Laws ſhould ever come into Peoples Heads, that are ſuppoſed to have no manner of Notion of any diſtinction between *Good* or *Evil*, *Juſt* or *Unjuſt*; and when there is in reality no ſuch thing, is what I cannot

not poſſibly conceive. On the contrary, I think that the Conſtant and Univerſal Support, that theſe Moral Virtues have always had from Human Laws, is a moſt demonſtrative Argument that Men have always thought them Subſtantially and Morally Good and Excellent in themſelves; and that they do Naturally and Eternally conduce to the good of all Societies. Indeed, ſome things may be, and often are Enacted or Prohibited by Human Laws, that have no real nor Intrinſick Goodneſs, nor Natural Evil in them; but are only *Good* and *Evil*, according to ſome particular Circumſtances and Exigencies of Affairs. And thus God himſelf was pleaſed to appoint the *Jews* many Rites and Obſervances that had not any real or Intrinſick goodneſs in them, but only were neceſſary for the preſent Circumſtances and Condition of that Nation. But then theſe are every where in Holy Writ, Poſt-poned to Moral Virtue (*a*), declared by God himſelf to be of much leſſer Value; and whenever there was a Competition between them, *theſe* were to give place to *thoſe*; which were properly ſpeaking good in their own Natures, and of Univerſal and Eternal Obligation; whereas the others were only good *pro hic & nunc*. Therefore they are ſaid by the Apoſtle, *to be not Good*, i. e. in themſelves or in their own Natures; but only by Inſtitution. But this is not the Caſe as to ſuch Actions as we have been mentioning, which are called Morally *Good* or *Evil*; for theſe have been conſtantly and univerſally diſtinguiſhed by Humane Laws, and have never been confounded or changed. For can any

(*a*) Mich. 6. 8. Deut. 10. 12. 1 Sam. 15. 22. Pſal. 50. 8.

Man

Man produce a Law that ever obtained univerſally againſt paying Adoration and Worſhip to the Deity? againſt Mens honouring their Parents, or againſt their being Juſt, Good, Merciful, and Righteous in their Dealings with one another? *Againſt ſuch things*, as St. *Paul* tells us, *there is no Law.* Nor is it poſſible for our Adverſaries to ſhew us, that the contrary Immoralities were ever univerſally thought good and lawful; or allowed and eſtabliſhed by any General Authority whatſoever; and ſhould the Reverſes to Moral Virtue be enjoined as Laws, and every one commanded to be Unjuſt, Oppreſſive, and Cruel, as now he is enjoyned the contrary, any one may imagine what would be the diſmal Conſequences of it.

3. But again, Another Argument for the Natural diſtinction between Good and Evil, may be drawn from the Conſideration of our Paſſions and Affections: For theſe are ſo framed and contrived by our Wiſe Creator, as to guide and direct us to Good, and to guard and preſerve us from Evil by a kind of Natural Inſtinct, which we find in our ſelves frequently previous to all Reaſoning and Conſideration. Thus, we perceive a ſtrange Horrour, and very ungrateful Senſations ſeize upon us immediately, on the ſight of a Scene of Miſery, or a Spectacle of Cruelty; and as ſoon as ever our Ears are entertained with the doleful Relation of ſuch Actions; ſo alſo an Inſtance of great Injuſtice or very baſe Ingratitude, raiſes a juſt Indignation in us againſt the offending Perſon; and we cannot avoid being uneaſily moved and affected in ſuch

Caſes.

Caſes. While on the contrary, a very pleaſing Satisfaction of Soul ariſes in us, when we ſee, or hear of an Inſtance of great Kindneſs, Juſtice, Generoſity, and Compaſſion. Now this Sympathizing of our Natural Affections with our Reaſon; and their approving and diſapproving the very ſame things that it doth, is a very convincing Argument that there is an Eſſential difference between Actions as to their being *Good or Evil*, and that we have a plain Knowledge of ſuch a diſtinction. For no doubt God implanted theſe Paſſions and Affections in our Natures, and gave them this *Turn* which we plainly perceive they have, in order to prepare the way for our Reaſons more thoroughly aſſuring us of the Natural Goodneſs and Excellence of Moral Virtue, when it comes to be Ripe, and ſufficient for that End; and in the mean time, to keep Children and Young Perſons, in whom we perceive theſe Natural Efforts to be very ſtrong, by a kind of Anticipation or Natural Inſtinct from doing ſuch things as their Reaſon, freely exerciſed, will afterwards condemn them for.

And now upon the whole, there being thus plainly proved an Eſſential and Natural Difference between Moral Good and Evil; and that the Reaſon of all Mankind freely and impartially exerciſed doth agree in this Point, that Morality conduces to the Happineſs, and Immorality to the Miſery of Human Nature: We may very juſtly conclude from hence, that all other Rational Agents muſt judge of *Good* and *Evil* after the ſame manner,

manner, and plainly diſtinguiſh *one* from the *other*. And they alſo muſt Know and Underſtand that their Perfection and Happineſs (though they may differ in ſome Circumſtances from us) doth conſiſt in Acting according to the Eternal Rules of Right Reaſon and Moral Virtue. For if the Caſe be not ſo, ſeveral Rational Natures all derived from the ſame Deity, may come to make contradictory Judgments, even when they Act according to the Great and Common Rule of their Nature. But the Principle of Right Reaſon, at this Rate, would be the moſt precarious thing imaginable, and Men could never poſſibly be aſſured that they were in the Right in any Point, or knew any thing at all. Aſſuredly therefore this Great Rule of Right Reaſon that God hath given his Creatures to govern and direct themſelves by, is no ſuch uncertain thing, is in no reſpect Contradictory to it ſelf; but muſt be Uniformly and Conſtantly the ſame in all Beings, that are endowed with it, when it is rightly and perfectly followed.

And from hence alſo we cannot but conclude, that the ſame Eternal, Conſtant and Uniform Law of Right Reaſon and Morality that God hath given as an Univerſal Guide to all Rational Beings, muſt alſo be in Him in the greateſt and moſt exquiſite Perfection. And that, not only becauſe all Perfections and Excellencies in the Creatures muſt neceſſarily be in that Firſt Being from whom they are derived, as I have already proved; But alſo, that if it were not ſo, God muſt be ſup-

poſed to have given us a Rule of Action that is contrary to his own Nature, or at leaſt vaſtly different from it. And that he hath contrived our Powers and Faculties ſo, as to deceive us in the moſt Material and Eſſential Points, and indeed hath left us no poſſible way of knowing the Truth of any thing whatſoever.

For, If when, as I have ſhewn above, God hath not only fixed in our Natures, a Deſire of Happineſs; but alſo diſpoſed them ſo, that every Power Faculty and Capacity of them convinces us that the Exerciſe of Moral Virtue is the Way, and indeed, the only Way to make us entirely happy. If I ſay after all this, there be no ſuch things as Moral Virtue and Goodneſs, but that all Things and Actions, both in us and the Deity, are purely and in their own Natures Indifferent; 'tis plain, *Reaſon* is the moſt ridiculous thing in the World, a Guide that ſerves to no manner of Purpoſe but to bewilder us in the Infinite Mazes of Errour, and to expoſe us to Roam and Float about in the boundleſs Ocean of Scepticiſm, where we can never find our Way certainly to any Place, nor direct our Courſe to the Diſcovery of any Truth whatſoever. But this not being to be ſuppoſed of the Deity, who contains in himſelf all Poſſible Excellence and Perfection; it muſt needs be that our Reaſon will direct us to conclude the Deity alſo guided and directed in all his Proceedings by the Eternal Rules of Right Reaſon and Truth: and conſequently that He will and doth always *exerciſe loving Kindneſs*,

neſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth; as the Prophet here ſpeaks.

And indeed, the *Hobbian* Notion of a Deity guided only by Arbitrary Will Omnipotent, without any regard to Reaſon, Goodneſs, Juſtice, and Wiſdom, is ſo far from attributing any Perfection to God, or as they pretend, being the Liberty and Sovereignty of the Deity; that it really introduces the greateſt Weakneſs and Folly, and the moſt Brutiſh Madneſs that can be! for what elſe can be ſuppoſed to be the Reſult of Irreſiſtible and Extravagant Will, purſuing the moſt fortuitous Caprichio's of Humour, without any Wiſdom, Ends, or Deſigns to Regulate its Motions by?

And of this the Ancient Heathens were ſo ſenſible, that they always connected *Goodneſs* with the Idea that they had of an *Omnipotent Mind's* being Supream Lord over all things in the Univerſe; for *Mind* not *guided* and *directed* by *Goodneſs* was, according to them, not νῦς but ἄνοια, *mere Folly and Madneſs*, and conſequently no true Deity. There is a Remarkable Paſſage of *Celſus's* to this purpoſe, which though introduced upon another Deſign, yet very clearly ſhews the Idea that the Heathens had of the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of the Deity. *God*, ſaith he, *can't do evil things, nor will any thing contrary to Nature (or Reaſon)* —— *for God is not the Preſident or Governour of Irregular or Inordinate Deſires; nor of erroneous Diſorder and Confuſion, but of a Nature truly Juſt and Righteous.* —— ἀλλ' ὅτι γε τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁ Θεὸς δύναται, οὐδὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν βέλεται.

---- ὃ γὰρ τῆς πολυμελοῦς ὀρθότητος, οὐδὲ τῆς πεπλανημένης ἀκοσμίας, ἀλλὰ τῆς ὀρθῆς καὶ δικαίας φύσεως Θεὸς ἔστιν ἀρχηγέτης. *Orig. contr. Celſ.* lib. 5. p. 240. *Cantabr.*

Excellently to the ſame Purpoſe, is that Saying of *Plotinus*, The *Deity doth always act according to his Nature or Eſſence, and that Nature or Eſſence diſcovereth Goodneſs and Juſtice in all its Operations: for indeed, if theſe things ſhould not be there* (i. e. *in God*) *where can they elſe be found?* Ποιεῖ τὸ Θεῖον ὡς πέφυκε, πέφυκε δὲ καλὰ τὰ ἀυτῷ ἑσίαν, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐνεργείαις ἀυτῷ καὶ τὸ δίκαιον συνεκφέρει, εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐκεῖ ταῦτα, πῆ ἂν εἴη; p. 265. *Ficin.*

And 'tis plain that the Heathens had a true Notion, that the Deity muſt be a Good, Juſt and Righteous Being; becauſe ſeveral of the old Atheiſts, as *Protagoras*, &c. argued againſt the Exiſtence of a Deity, from the Worlds being *ſo ill Made and Ordered as it is*, and from there being ſo much Evil and Miſery among Mankind, as they pretended to find in the World; but now there had been no manner of force in this Argument, and it had been ridiculous to bring it, if, both the Atheiſtical Propoſers of it, and their Antagoniſts, had not had a clear Notion that Goodneſs, Juſtice and Righteouſneſs are naturally included in the Idea of a God. Accordingly *Vaninus* tells us, That *Protagoras* uſed to ſay, *Si Deus non eſt unde igitur Bona? ſi autem eſt, unde Mala*, Amph. Ætern. Provid. *p.* 90. And the ſame thing *Tully* tells us alſo (*Lib. De Nat. Deorum*) that *Diagoras* uſed to object againſt a Deity. All which ſufficiently proves that they were all Agreed that there was ſome common

common Standard of Good and Evil; and that the Notion of a Deity had always theſe Attributes of Goodneſs and Juſtice connected with it.

And if this be ſo, as undoubtedly it is, we ſhall gain one more good Argument for this Natural and Eternal Diſtinction between Good and Evil, and a yet much Nobler Foundation for Morality. For we cannot but think, that a God who hath Perfect Goodneſs, Juſtice and Mercy, Eſſential to his Nature, and who hath Created ſeveral Orders of Being in the World, to make them Happy, and in order to diſplay his own Glory, by his Juſt, Kind and Gracious Dealing with them: we cannot but think, I ſay, that God will give to thoſe of his Creatures, whom he hath endowed with Reaſon, and a Power of Liberty and Choice, ſuch a Method of knowing his Will, (the Way that leads to their own Happineſs) as that they ſhall never be Miſtaken about it, but by their own groſs Fault and Neglect. And alſo that he will make the difference between Good and Evil, and between Virtue and Vice ſo plain and conſpicuous, that no one can miſs of the Knowledge of his Duty, but by a wilful Violation of thoſe Powers and Faculties God hath graciouſly implanted in his Nature. And all this we ſee God hath Actually done: and indeed much more; having over and above connected very great Rewards with the Practice of Virtue and Morality. And hath either naturally planted in the Minds of Men a Notion of ſome future State, or elſe hath given our Nature ſuch a Power, as that we may attain to

ſuch

ſuch a Notion : for we find a very plain Belief and Expectation of ſuch a State, among many of the Ancient and Modern Heathens.

And over and above all this, he hath alſo given us a clear Revelation of his Will in the Holy Scripture, *that ſure Word of Prophecy and Inſtruction*, whereby we may, if we will, gain a yet plainer Knowledge of our Duty, be more perfectly Inſtructed in the Method of Eternal Salvation, and find alſo much higher Encouragements, and much greater Helps and Aſſiſtances than we had before in the State of Nature. And all this is vouchſafed us to enforce the more effectually the Practice of Moral Virtue, and to enable us more perfectly to perform thoſe Things, which the Univerſal Reaſon of Mankind approves as Good, Lovely and Advantageous to Human Nature.

F I N I S.

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A

Refutation of the *Atheistical Notion*

OF

Fate, or *Absolute Necessity.*

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH of St. *Paul*,
November the Seventh, 1698.

BEING

The Eighth of the LECTURE for that Year,
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

By *JOHN HARRIS*, M.A.
and Fellow of the ROYAL-SOCIETY.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. L.* for *Richard Wilkin*, at the
King's-Head in St. *Paul's Church-Yard*, 1698.

JEREM. ix. 24.

Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſe loving kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for in theſe things do I delight, ſaith the Lord.

I Did, in my laſt Diſcourſe, begin to Speak to the Second Particular conſiderable in theſe Words, *viz.*

An Account of ſome of thoſe Attributes which God is here ſaid to Exerciſe in the Earth, and in which he Delights.

On which I did not think it neceſſary to Diſcourſe particularly; but from thence took an Occaſion to Remove two Great Bars to the true Knowledge of God and of his Attributes, which Sceptical and Unbelieving Men had raiſed in the Way. Which were Theſe:

I. That there is in reality no ſuch Thing as Moral Good or Evil: But that all Actions are in their own Nature indifferent.

II. That all things are determined by abſolute Fatality: And that God himſelf, and all Creatures whatſoever, are Neceſſary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Natures at all.

The former of Theſe I did then diſpatch, plainly proving the Exiſtence of Moral Good and Evil, and anſwering the Objections againſt it.

I proceed now to ſpeak to the latter; which is an Objection that our Adverſaries are very fond of, and do all of them, upon Occaſion, have recourſe to. And it is indeed a great Point gain'd if they could make it out, and will effectually deſtroy all manner of Religious Obligation, and all dread of Puniſhment for doing amiſs. For as one obſerves on theſe Three things all Religion is founded: 1. That there is a God who made, preſides over, and governeth all things. 2. That there are ſome things φύσει καλὰ καὶ δίκαια, *in their own Natures good and juſt.* 3. That there is alſo ſomething ἐφ' ἡμῖν, ſomething *in our own Power to do*, whereby we are Accountable for our Actions, and become guilty when we do amiſs. But there can certainly be neither Good nor Evil in any Man's Actions, and no Rewards or Puniſhments can be the Conſequents of them, if nothing at all be in our own Power, if whatever we act or commit, it is abſolutely impoſſible for us to avoid acting or committing. Which yet muſt be the caſe, if, as they aſſert, *Things are determined by abſolute Fatality*; *and that God himſelf and all Creatures whatſoever are neceſſary Agents, without having any Power of Choice, or any real Liberty in their Natures at all.*

Dr. *Cudworth* in Preface to his *Intellectual Syſtem.*

I ſhall therefore at this Time, 1. Shew you that this is plainly their Aſſertion, from their own words.

2. I ſhall endeavour to ſhew the Groundleſneſs of of thoſe Reaſons on which they build their Hypotheſis.

And 3. from ſome Arguments, Eſtabliſh the contrary Poſition of the Freedom and Liberty of Human Nature.

1. And

1. And that this is the Aſſertion of the Two great Atheiſtical Writers, is very plain, Mr. *Hobbs* declares himſelf to be of the Opinion, (*a*) *That no Man can be free from Neceſſitation. That Nothing taketh beginning from it ſelf, but from the Action of ſome other Immediate Agent without it ſelf. And that therefore, when firſt a Man hath an Appetite or Will to ſomething, to which immediately before he had no Appetite nor Will, the Cauſe of his Will is not the Will it ſelf, but ſomething elſe not in his own diſpoſing. So that whereas it is out of Controverſie that of Voluntary Actions the Will is the Neceſſary Cauſe, and by this which is ſaid, the Will is alſo cauſed by other things whereof it diſpoſeth not, it followeth, that Voluntary Actions have all of them Neceſſary Cauſes, and therefore are neceſſitated.* (*b*) *This* (ſaith he alſo) *is a certain Truth; that there are Certain and Neceſſary Cauſes which make every Man to will what he willeth*, Ib. p. 306. And then as to the Deity, I have already more than once taken notice, That *Hobbs* denies Him any *Underſtanding, Senſe, or Knowledge*; (*c*) and aſſerts him to be *without any Ends or Deſigns in his Actions and Operations.* Which plainly makes Him an Agent abſolutely and phyſically Neceſſary; as, indeed, follows alſo from the Notion of his Being Corporeal, which the ſame Writer every where maintains (*d*).

(*a*) *Hobbs* Tripos, p. 297.

(*b*) Ibid. p. 312.

(*c*) Vid. Sermon V. p. 51. Serm. VI. p. 9.

(*d*) Vid. Serm. V. p. 49.

Spinoza alſo is very Expreſs in this Matter, as I have already ſhewn (*e*) in ſome Meaſure. *In mente* (ſaith he) *nulla eſt abſoluta ſive libera voluntas; ſed Mens ad Hoc vel illud Volendum determinatur à Cauſâ, quæ etiam ab aliâ, & hæc iterùm ab aliâ & ſic in Infinitum (f).* And in another place, *Voluntas non poteſt vocari Cauſa libera, ſed Tantum neceſſaria.* (*g*) And yet

(*e*) Serm. V. p. 51.

(*f*) *Spinoza Op. Poſthum.* p. 85.

(*g*) p. 28.

yet on another Occaſion, and in another Book, he hath theſe words, *Clarè & diſtinctè Intelligimus, ſi ad Noſtram naturam attendamus, nos in noſtris actionibus eſſe liberos, & de multis deliberare propter id ſolum, quod volumus* (*a*). Which is as plain and palpable a Contradiction to what he, with the ſame air of Aſſurance, delivers in other places, as can poſſibly be.

(*a*) *Princep. Philoſ. Carteſ. Demonſtrat.* p. 103.

Mr. *Hobbs* alſo cannot be acquitted from expreſly contradicting himſelf as to this Point of Liberty and Neceſſity; for he tells us in his Reaſons for his Opinion (*b*) *That he that reflecteth on himſelf cannot but be ſatisfied. That a Free Agent is he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will.* And ſuch an Agent he allows Man to be, and ſaith he hath *proved it too.* But how he will reconcile this with his Aſſertion that *no Man can be free from Neceſſitation,* and that all our Actions have *neceſſary Cauſes,* and therefore are *neceſſitated,* I cannot imagine. As to *Spinoza's* Account of the Deity, in Reference to this Point, I have given a hint or two of it already. He makes God to be the ſame with *Nature,* or the *Univerſe,* to be *Corporeal* and an abſolutely neceſſary Agent; one who cannot poſſibly help doing as he doth; one who hath *no Power of Creation,* nor doth *act* according to *free Will* (*c*). But is Limited and Reſtrained to one conſtant Method of Acting by the Abſolute Neceſſity of his Nature, or by his Infinite Power. And leſt any one ſhould miſunderſtand him ſo far, as to imagine that he means by this, that God is by the Excellency and Perfection of his Nature, in all his Operations exactly conformable to the Rules of *Juſtice, Goodneſs* and *Right Reaſon*; He plainly excludes that Notion in theſe words; *Qui dicunt Deum omnia*

(*b*) *Hobbs* Tripos, p. 314.

(*c*) p. 29. *Op. Poſthum.* and p. 33. 18.

ſub

ſub Ratione Boni agere, Hi aliquid extra Deum videntur ponere, quod à Deo non dependet, ad quod Deus tanquam ad Exemplar in Operando attendit, vel ad quod, tanquam ad certum ſcopum collimat : Quod profectò nihil aliud eſt quam Deum Fato ſubjicere (a).

(a) *Op. Poſth.* P. 32.

Now, I think nothing can more ſhew the wicked Perverſneſs of this Writer's Mind, than this Paſſage; For he could not but know very well that when Divines aſſert the Deity to be *Eſſentially* and *neceſſarily Good*, they do not mean that Goodneſs is any thing *Extrinſical* to the Divine Nature, much leſs that it is ſomething which hath *no dependance* upon it: but only that the Excellency and Perfection of his Nature is ſuch, as that it is in every thing exactly conformable to Right Reaſon; and therefore this was certainly a wilful Perverſion of their Senſe, ſet up on purpoſe to overthrow the Notion of Moral Goodneſs in the Deity. But how vain is it for him to tell us, that for the Deity to *Act ſub Ratione Boni*, is for Him to be Subject to Fate, when at the ſame time he Himſelf Aſſerts, that God is in every reſpect a Neceſſary Agent, without any *free Will*, nay, without any *Knowledge* or *Underſtanding* in his Nature at all? This is ſo plain a Demonſtration, that it was his chief and Primary Deſign to baniſh out of Mens Minds the Notion of Moral Goodneſs, that nothing can be more: and therefore tho' he was reſolved to Introduce abſolute Neceſſity into all Actions both Divine and Human; yet it ſhould be ſuch an one as ſhould leave no Umbrage for any diſtinction between Good and Evil, or any Foundation for Rewards and Puniſhments. And in this Notion of Neceſſity, theſe Writers follow *Democritus*, *Heraclitus*, *Leucippus*, and that Atheiſtical

iſtical Sect; who maintain'd that there was Nothing in all Nature but *Matter* and *Motion*. And therefore when theſe Modern Writers aſſert that *there is nothing in the Univerſe but Body*, as they do, they run *Fate* farther than moſt of the Old Heathen Patrons of Neceſſity did. For there was none but the *Democritick Sect*, that ſuppoſed Fate to have a Power over the Will of Man; and in this particular, even *they* were deſerted by *Epicurus*; as I obſerve below. The *Pythagoreans*, *Platoniſts*, and *Stoicks* agreed that the *Mind of Man was free*. And 'tis well known that the *Stoicks* did in this *Free Power* of the Will of Man, found that arrogant Aſſertion of theirs, That *a Wiſe Man* was in one reſpect more excellent than the Gods; for they were Good by the Neceſſity of their Nature and could not help it, whereas Man had a Power of being otherwiſe, and therefore was the more commendable for being ſo. There was, indeed, ſome of the Poets, and ſome few of the Philoſophers too, who did ſubject the Gods themſelves to Fate or Neceſſity. Thus *Seneca* in one place ſaith, *Neceſſitas & Deos alligat*; *Irrevocabilis Divina pariter ac Humana Curſus vehit. Ille ipſe omnium Conditor ac Rector ſcripſit quidem Fata, ſed ſequitur, ſemper paret, ſemel juſſit.* Which Opinion is effectually refuted and expoſed by *Lucian*, in that Dialogue of his called Ζεὺς ἐλεγχόμενος. As alſo by *Lactantius* in his Firſt Book *De falſâ Religione*, Chap. 11. But this, as I doubt not but *Seneca* and ſome others underſtood in a ſofter ſenſe than at firſt ſight it appears to have, ſo was it the Doctrine of but a few; for generally the Heathens did fully believe that Prayers and Sacrifices would alter a Man's Fortune and Circumſtances for the

the better; that they would appeaſe the Anger, and gain the Favour and Bleſſing of the Gods, and that Their Nature was not ſo abſolutely Fatal and Neceſſary, but that they could freely deal with their Creatures according as they deſerved at their hands. For we find *Balbus* the Stoick mentioned by *Cicero*, telling us, That *the Nature of God would not be moſt Powerful and Excellent, if it were Subject to the ſame Neceſſity or Nature, Quâ Cœlum, maria, terræq; reguntur: Nihil Enim eſt præſtantius Deo, Nulli igitur eſt Naturæ Obediens & Subjectus.* So that theſe Writers tread in the Steps of the *worſt*, and moſt Atheiſtical of the Heathen Philoſophers, and maintain a more rigid Fate, and a more irreſiſtible Neceſſity than moſt of them did. But,

2. I come next to ſhew the Groundleſneſs of thoſe Reaſons and Arguments on which theſe Men build their Hypotheſis of Abſolute Neceſſity.

And firſt as to the Reaſons of Mr. *Hobbs*. The Chief that he brings againſt the freedom of Human Actions are theſe, ſaith Mr. *Hobbs*, *In all Deliberations and alternate Succeſſions of Contrary Appetites, 'tis the laſt only which we call Will; this is immediately before the doing of any Action, or next before the doing of it become Impoſſible.* Alſo, *Nothing*, ſaith he, *can take beginning from it ſelf, but muſt do it from the Action of ſome other immediate Agent without it; if therefore a Man hath a Will to ſomething, which he had not before: the Cauſe of his Willing is not the Will it ſelf, but ſomething elſe not in his own diſpoſing. So that whereas 'tis out of Controverſie, that of Voluntary Actions the Will is the Neceſſary Cauſe; and by this which is now ſaid, the Will is alſo Cauſed by Other*

things whereof it diſpoſeth not, it follows that Voluntary Actions have all of them Neceſſary Cauſes, and therefore are neceſſitated. Agen alſo, *Every ſufficient Cauſe*, ſaith he, *is a Neceſſary one, for if it did not produce its Effect neceſſarily, 'twas becauſe ſomething was wanting to its Production, and then it was not ſufficient. Now from hence it follows that whatſoever is produced, is produced Neceſſarily, and conſequently all Voluntary Actions are Neceſſitated. And to define a Free Agent to be that, which when all things are preſent which are neceſſary to produce the Effect, can nevertheleſs not produce it, is Contradiction and Nonſenſe; for 'tis all one as to ſay the Cauſe may be ſufficient* (i. e.) *Neceſſary, and yet the Effect ſhall not follow.* This is the Subſtance of all Mr. *Hobbs* his Proof againſt Free Will; in which, there are almoſt as many Miſtakes as there are Sentences; and from hence it plainly will appear, that either he had no clear Idea's of what he wrote about; or elſe did deſignedly endeavour to perplex, darken and confound the Cauſe: For in the firſt place, He confounds *the Power or Faculty of Willing* in Man with the *laſt act of Willing*, or Determination after Deliberating. And conſequently doth not diſtinguiſh between what the Schools would call *Hypothetical* and *Abſolute Neceſſity*: which yet ought to be carefully done in the Point between us; for an Agent may be free, and no doubt every Man is free to deliberate on, and to compare the Objects offered to his Choice, and yet not be ſo *after he hath choſen.* Then, indeed, *Neceſſity* comes in; 'tis impoſſible for any one to chooſe and not to chooſe, or to determine and not to determine; and after the Election is made, no one ever ſuppoſed that a Man

is

is free not to make it. And therefore if by the *Will* Mr. *Hobbs* means that *laſt Act of Willing* or Electing, *which immediately precedes Acting*, or *which is next before the doing of a thing become impoſſible*, as he expreſſeth himſelf; he fights with his own ſhadow, and oppoſes that which no body ever denied: for no Man ever ſuppoſed *Freedom* and *Determination* to be the ſame thing; but only that Man before he determined was free, whether he would determine ſo and ſo, or not. And accordingly he himſelf defines a voluntary Agent, *to be him that hath not made an end of Deliberating* (*a*).

(*a*) Tripos, *p.* 311.

Agen, 2. 'Tis hard to know what he means here, by *Nothing taking its beginning from it ſelf:* he is talking about *Voluntary Actions*, and about the freedom of Human Nature, and therefore ſhould referr this to the *Will* of Man: but the Inſtances he afterwards produces, are of *Contingent Things* (*b*), which are nothing at all to his purpoſe. But if this be ſpoken of the *Will*, what will it ſignifie? I grant Nothing can take its beginning from itſelf; the Will of Man took its beginning from God, and Voluntary Actions (we ſay) take their beginning from the Faculty or Power of Willing placed in our Souls: But what then? doth it follow from thence, that thoſe Actions we call *Voluntary* are *Neceſſitated*, becauſe that they take their Original from that free Power of Election God hath placed in our Natures, and not from themſelves? I dare ſay, no one can ſee the conſequence of this part of the Argument. And it will not in the leaſt follow from hence, *that the Cauſe of a Man's Willing, is not the Will it ſelf; but ſomething elſe not in his own diſpoſing:* Which yet he boldly aſſerts.

(*b*) *Ibid.* 315.

It is the *Power of Willing*, or that *Faculty* which we find in our selves, of *being free* (in many Cases) to Act or not Act, or to Act after such a particular manner, which is generally called the *Will*; and this is commonly said to be *free*. Tho' I think (as one hath observed) (*a*) it is not so proper a way of Speaking, as to say, the *Man is free*. For besides that 'tis not usual, nor indeed proper, to predicate one Faculty of another; 'tis hardly good sense to say the *Will is free*, in the manner now explain'd; for that would be the same thing as to say, that a free Power is free; whereas it is not the Power, but the Man that hath the Power, that is *free*. But however the Other way of Expression hath prevailed and doth do so, and I don't think any one is misled by it into Error; for that which every body understands and means by saying the *Will of Man is free*, is, that Man hath in his Nature such a *free Power*, as is called his *Will*. Now from hence it will not follow that a Man is free whether he will *Will*, or *not*; for he *must Will* someway, either to Act, or not to Act; or to Act after such a particular manner. But it will follow, that when a Man hath made any particular *Volition*, or hath determined the Point whether he shall Act, or forbear to Act, he is then no longer at Liberty, as to this particular Case and Instant; for the Determination is then actually made, and the Man no longer free not to make it. But this proves nothing at all against the Liberty or Freedom of the Mind of Man.

(*a*) Mr. *Lock*, in his *Essay of Humane Understanding*.

Again, what doth Mr. *Hobbs* mean by the *Will's being the Necessary Cause of Voluntary Actions*? Doth he mean that the Will of Man must of Necessity act

act freely, and produce Actions voluntarily; if he doth, we are agreed; but if he means that the Will is previouſly neceſſitated in every Act of Volition to Will juſt as it doth, and could not poſſibly have willed otherwiſe; this is to beg the Queſtion, and to take for granted the great thing in Diſpute; 'tis to call that *out of Controverſie*, which is the only thing *in Controverſie*; which indeed, when a Man contradicts the Common Senſe and Reaſon of Mankind, without Proof, is the beſt way of Proceeding.

But that which looks moſt like an Argument for the Neceſſity of all Humane Actions, is this which he brings in the laſt place. *That Cauſe* (ſaith he) *is a ſufficient Cauſe which wanteth nothing requiſite to produce its Effect, but ſuch a Cauſe muſt alſo be a Neceſſary one; for had it not neceſſarily produced its Effect, it muſt have been becauſe ſomething was wanting in it for that Purpoſe, and then it could not have been ſufficient: So that whatever is produced, is produced neceſſarily; for it could not have been at all without a ſufficient (or neceſſary) Cauſe; and therefore alſo, all Voluntary Actions are neceſſitated.*

Now all this proves to his Purpoſe (I think) juſt nothing at all: He proceeds on in his former Error of confounding the *Act of Willing* with *the Power of Willing*; and of making *Hypothetical* the ſame with *abſolute Neceſſity*; for, not now to diſpute what he ſaith of *every ſufficient Cauſe's being a Neceſſary one*; allowing that when ever any Volition or Determination is made, or when ever any Voluntary Action is done, that the Will of Man was a ſufficient Cauſe to produce that Effect; nay, that it did at laſt neceſſarily produce it; he can inferr nothing from hence more

more than this; That when the Will hath determined or willed, 'tis no longer free to Will, or Nill that particular thing at that particular Inſtant; which I don't believe any Body will ever, or ever did deny. But this will not prove at all that the Will was neceſſitated to make that Determination *à Priori*, and that it could have made no other; which yet is what he means, and ought to have clearly made out. For the ſame Power or Faculty of Liberty, which enabled it to make that Determination, would have been a ſufficient Cauſe for it to have made another contrary to it, or differing from it: and then when that had been made, it would have been as neceſſary as the former. And therefore that Definition of a *Free Agent's being that, which when all things are preſent which are needful to produce the Effect, can nevertheleſs not produce it*, (tho' I don't think it the beſt) doth not, when rightly underſtood, *imply any Contradiction, nor is it Nonſenſe* at all. For the meaning of it is, That he is properly Free, who hath the Power of Determination in himſelf; and when all Requiſites are ready, ſo that nothing ſhall extrinſecally either hinder him from, or compel him to Act, can yet chooſe whether he will Act or not.

Thus, if a Man hath Pen, Ink and Paper, and a place to write upon, his Hand well and at Liberty, and underſtands how to write; he hath all *things preſent that are needful to produce the Effect of Writing*; *yet he can nevertheleſs not produce that Effect*; becauſe he can chooſe after all, whether he will write or no.

Mr. *Hobbs* defines a Free Agent to be *him that can do if he will*, and *forbear if he will*, and *that*

Liberty

Liberty is the absence of all external Impediments (*a*); which if he intended any thing by it, but to palliate a bad Cause, and to amuse the Person he wrote to, is as much Nonsense and Contradiction to what he himself advances about Necessity as is possible. For how a Man can be said to Act necessarily, that hath no *external Impediments* to hinder him, or Causes to compel him, but is free to *Act if he will* or *forbear if he will*, is what I believe no Man can possibly conceive.

(*a*) Tripos, p. 314.

Thus we see plainly, that this great Patron of Necessity hath very little to say for his Darling Notion, and that he plainly contradicts and is Inconsistent with himself. Had he indeed dared speak out, and thought it time to declare his Opinion freely, he would, no doubt, have proceeded on other Grounds in this Point, and made use of Arguments more agreeable to his *Set of Principles*: which being allowed him, would have demonstrated an absolute Necessity of all things whatsoever. For he was a thorough Corporealist, and maintained that there was nothing more in Nature, but *Matter* and *Motion*; which if it were true, it is most certain, that all Things and Actions must be inevitably Fatal and Necessary; for (as Mr. *Lock* well observes) nothing but *Thought* or *Willing*, in a *Spirit*, can begin Motion. The *Necessity* therefore in such an Hypothesis would be the true Ancient Democritick Fate; the ὑλικὴ ἀνάγκη, or, as *Epicurus* calls it, τὴν φυσικὴν εἱμαρμένην, a through *Material necessity Mechanically* producing all Things: or the *Fate of the Naturalists*, who held nothing besides *Matter* and *Motion*. But this Notion, for some Reasons best known to himself, he did not think fit to insist on, when he wrote this Tract against the

the Liberty of Human Nature. Tho' his Succeſſor *Spinoza*, with a little Variation did; whoſe Arguments we muſt next conſider.

Spinoza, as I have formerly ſhewed, was an Abſolute Corporealiſt as well as Mr. *Hobbs*; but finding that Cogitation could never be accounted for from *Matter* and *Motion* only, he ſuppoſes *Cogitation* Eſſential to *Matter*; and as he makes but *one only Subſtance* in the World, which is the Matter of All Things, or God; ſo he ſuppoſes Cogitation to be one of the Eſſential Attributes of this Deity, as Extenſion is the other. And from hence he concludes, *That all things, according to the Infinite variety of their ſeveral Natures, muſt neceſſarily flow from God or the whole, and muſt be juſt what they are, and cannot be, nor could not poſſibly have been, any otherwiſe (a).* He doth indeed Stile the Deity *Cauſa Libera*, and ſay *he is only ſo (b).* But the reaſon he aſſigns for it, is only becauſe *nothing can compel him to, or hinder him from* doing any Thing; but he expreſly denies him to have either *Underſtanding* or *Free Will* (c). And he declares oftentimes, That all things flow from the Deity by as *Abſolute a Neceſſity*, as that the Three Angles of a Triangle are *equal to Two right ones.* And then as to *the Mind of Man*, he gives this Reaſon why it cannot have any free Will; *Quia mens ad hoc, vel illud Volendum determinatur à Cauſâ, quæ etiam ab alia, & hæc iterum ab aliâ & ſic in Infinitum (d).* The ſame thing alſo he aſſerts in another Place (e), and from thence undertakes to prove alſo, that God cannot have any *Free Will*; and withal ſaith, That *Underſtanding and Will*, as they are called, *belong to the Nature of God, juſt as Motion and Reſt, and*

(a) *Ex neceſſitate Divinæ naturæ, Infinita Infinitis modis ſequi debent.* *Op. Poſthum.* p. 16. 18.
(b) p. 17.
(c) p. 18. *Tract. Theol. Polit. c.4.p.63.*
(d) *Op. Poſthum.* p. 85.
(e) p. 28.

and other Natural Things do, which are abſolutely determined to Operate juſt as they do, and cannot do otherwiſe (*a*). This is the Argument of *Spinoza*, to prove that there is no ſuch thing as freedom in the Nature of Man, but that he is determined in every thing by Abſolute and Inevitable Neceſſity. And this Neceſſity alſo 'tis plain according to him, is purely *Phyſical* and *Mechanical.*

(*a*) p. 29.

As to the Refutation of which, I think, I have already effectually removed the foundation on which it is all built, by proving that there are ſuch *Beings as Immaterial Subſtances*, and that *God himſelf* is ſuch an *One*, or *a Spirit* (*b*). For all the Neceſſity *Spinoza* contends for, depends purely on *his Notion* of the Deity; as appears ſufficiently from what I have produced of his words. If therefore it be true, that God be an *Immaterial Subſtance*, a Being *Diſtinct* from Nature, or the Univerſe; and the Creator and Producer of all things, (as I think I have very clearly proved) 'tis moſt certain that the whole Chain of *Spinoza*'s Argument for Neceſſity is broken to pieces. For the Reaſon he aſſigns for the neceſſary Operations of the Deity, are not the Perfections of his Nature determining him to *Good* and *Juſt*, *Lovely* and *Reaſonable* things; but that the Deity being *Univerſal Nature*, All things and Operations are *Parts of him*, and their ſeveral Ways and Manners of Acting and exiſting according to the neceſſary Laws of Motion and Mechaniſm, *are his Underſtanding and Will:* which Ignorant People, he ſaith, may perhaps take in a literal Senſe, and think that God can properly *Know* or *Will* any thing; but that in reality there is no ſuch thing as Underſtanding or Free Will in God, ſince

(*b*) *Vid.* Serm. 4, & 5.

all things flow from Him by Inevitable Neceſſity. And if there be not any freedom in the Deity, that is in the *whole*, there can be none in *Men*, or in any other Beings, who are but *Parts* of him.

If this indeed be true, that there is no other God but Nature; then 'tis eaſie to ſee that all things muſt be governed by *abſolute Fatality*, and be in every reſpect *Phyſically neceſſary*; there can then be no ſuch thing as Contingency, or any Voluntary Actions; and if we were ſure of this, 'tis indeed the greateſt Ignorance and Folly in the World, to pretend to talk any thing about it. But on the other hand, if there be a Deity who is an *Infinitely perfect Being*, *diſtinct from Nature:* who *Created* all things by *the Word of his Power*, and *for whoſe ſole Pleaſure they are and were Created*, then none of thoſe Conſequences will follow; but it will appear very reaſonable to believe, that God hath ſtill a Care and Providence over that World which he made at firſt: and that *he delights to exerciſe loving Kindneſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth*; as the Prophet here ſpeaks: That he hath made ſome Creatures capable of *Knowing and Underſtanding* this, and who conſequently have a free Power, as in other things, ſo of giving Praiſe and Glory to ſo Great and Wonderful a Being, nay, and of *Glorying* themſelves in being capacitated to attain ſo Excellent a Knowledge. And that Man hath ſuch a Power or Freedom of Will, in his Nature, is what I ſhall now proceed in the laſt place plainly to prove.

1. And the firſt Argument I ſhall make uſe of to demonſtrate this, ſhall *be the Experience of all Mankind*. And this, one would think, ſhould be of great Weight, and

and turn the Scale againſt all the Atheiſtical Metaphyſicks in the World; and ſo, no doubt it would, were it not wicked Mens *Intereſt* to advance the contrary Notion. Now that we have a free Power of deliberating, in many Caſes, which way 'tis beſt for us to proceed; that we can act this way or that way, according as we like beſt; and that we can often forbear whether we will Act at all, or not, is a Truth ſo clear and manifeſt, that we are (I think) almoſt as certain of it as we are of our own being and Exiſtence; and 'tis an unimaginable thing how any Man can be perſwaded that he hath no ſuch Power (*a*). Indeed, one may by *Sophiſtical words, Metaphyſical Terms,* and abſtruſe Unintelligible Banter, be perhaps a little amuſed and confounded for the preſent. But that any one ſhould by ſuch a *Jargon* be perſuaded out of his Senſes, his Reaſon, and his Experience, and continue in that Opinion, is what I do believe never yet befel any Rational and Thinking Man. When *Zeno* brought his ſilly Sophiſtical Argument to prove there was no ſuch thing as Motion; his Antagoniſt thought it to no purpoſe to return an Anſwer to what plainly was contradictory to the common Senſe of Mankind; and therefore convinc'd him only, *by getting up and Walking.* And the very ſame Return will baffle and expoſe all the Pretended Arguments for Neceſſity. For 'tis plain, He had a Power

(*a*) Had it not been a thing Undeniable that the Will of Man is free, and had not *Epicurus*, and his Follower *Lucretius*, very well known that it was a thing which every one could not but experience in Himſelf, he had certainly, as a very Learned Perſon obſerves (*Dr.* Lucas *Enquiry after Happineſs*, Vol. I. p. 156, 157.) followed his Old Maſter *Democritus*, and aſſerted the Mind *of* Man to be as neceſſarily and fatally moved by the ſtrokes of his Atoms, as Natural and Irrational Bodies are. But this Opinion he was forced to deſert, and to aſſert the Liberty of the Soul of Man; and 'twas to make this out according to his Senſeleſs Hypotheſis, that he Invented that Unaccountable Oblique Motion of his Atoms; which *Lucretius* calls *Exiguum Clinamen Principiorum.* Lib. 2.

firſt whether he would have walked or not, he could have walked Five Turns, or Fifty; he could have gone acroſs the Room, or length-wiſe; round it, or from Angle to Angle. And I dare ſay, no Sophiſtry or Metaphyſicks whatever would have convinced him that none of theſe were in his Power, when he plainly found them all to be ſo; any more than he was convinced a Body could not move out of its place, when he had ſeen and tried a Thouſand times that it would. 'Tis the ſame thing in reference to the Thoughts of our Minds, as it is in the Motions of our Bodies. We plainly find we have a Power in abundance of Caſes, to preferr one thought before another, and to remove our Contemplation from one Notion or Idea to another: We can, in our Minds, compare and revolve over the ſeveral Objects of our Choice; and we can oftentimes chooſe whether we will do this, or not; and this Internal Freedom in Reference to our Thoughts and Idea's, we do as *plainly perceive*, and are as *ſure* of, as we are that we can voluntarily move our Body or any part of it from place to place. And as I have plainly ſhewed you above, our Adverſaries do grant and allow this when it is for their Turn.

But they will ſay, tho' we ſeem *to be free, and do think and perceive our ſelves to be ſo, yet in reality we are not; and it is only our Ignorance of Things and Cauſes, which induces us to be of this miſtaken Opinion (a); and the Idea of Liberty which Men have is this, that they know no Cauſe of their Actions; for to ſay they*

(a) *Falluntur homines quòd ſe liberos eſſe putant, quæ opinio in hoc ſolo conſiſtit, quod ſuarum Actionum ſint conſcii, & Ignari Cauſarum à quibus determinantur. Hæc ergo eſt eorum libertatis Idea quod ſuarum Actionum nullam cognoſcunt Cauſam. Nam quod aiunt humanas Actiones à Voluntate pendere verba ſunt quorum nullam habent Ideam.* Bapt. Spinoz. Op Poſthum. p. 73. Vid. etiam, p. 37.

they

they depend on the Will, is to talk about what they do not underſtand, and to uſe words of which they have no Idea's at all. To which, I ſay, that I cannot but be of the Opinion that it is a good Rational way enough of Proceeding, to pronounce of things according as we do experience them to be, and to declare them to be that which we have all the Reaſon in the World to think and believe that they really are. And I think we may well enough own and be contented with the Charge of Ignorance here laid upon us. For the Caſe is thus: We think our ſelves *free*, becauſe we plainly *find* and *experiment* our ſelves to be ſo in a Thouſand Inſtances; and this alſo theſe Penetrating Gentlemen ſometimes, as I have ſhewed, do kindly allow; and we are *indeed wholly Ignorant of any Cauſes that do abſolutely determine us to* Action; or which do *neceſſitate* us in what we do, previous to that free Power which we find in our ſelves; ſo that *plainly perceiving* our ſelves to have this *free Power*, and being *Ignorant* of any true Reaſon why we ſhould believe we are miſtaken in what we perceive and know, we do, indeed, (ſuch is our Ignorance and Weakneſs) embrace the Opinion that there is a *Liberty of Action in Human Nature*. And this free Power or Liberty which we find in us, we not being deep Metaphyſicians, call the *Will*; by which we underſtand, as I have ſhewed before, not any *Particular Act of Volition*, but the *Power* or *Faculty of Willing*. And ſince we plainly perceive that in many caſes we are not *determined to Action* by any thing without us, but do *chooſe* or *refuſe*, *act* or *not act*, according as *we pleaſe*; and being withal *groſly Ignorant* of any Cauſe theſe Actions have, but what we find and perceive

ceive them to have, we call our *free Will the Cauſe of theſe Actions, and ſay they depend on it:* and yet after all, do we not find out, that *we talk about what we do not underſtand, and uſe words that we have no Idea of.* But our Adverſaries, it ſeems, have a quite different relliſh of things, they ſoar in a higher and more ſubtle Region, they will not condeſcend to ſpeak *common ſenſe* in this Matter; *Tho' they plainly underſtand,* (as they tell us) *that they are really free as to many Actions*, and can *deliberate whether they will do them or not, purely becauſe they have a free Power ſo to do* (*a*); tho' they are *ſatisfied that they can act if they will, or forbear if they will* (*b*); yet they ſay this is in reality a Miſtake, and that there is no ſuch thing as freedom after all, but that all Actions are abſolutely neceſſitated. And as for the *Power or Faculty* which is vulgarly called the *Will*; that ſometimes is one thing ſometimes another, according as they think fit to name it. Sometimes 'tis an *Act of Volition* that follows the *Ultimum dictamen Intellectûs*, and ſometimes 'tis *the Underſtanding itſelf* (*c*). Now 'tis nothing *but an Idea* (*d*), and by and by a meer *Ens Rationis* (*d*), or an Imaginary Cauſe of Action, which *Ignorant Men* have fanſied that they have in themſelves (*e*). So hard is it for Men that fly ſo high, to have a diſtinct view of any thing below. But I proceed,

(*a*) *Spinozæ Princip. Philoſ. Cartes Demonſt.* p. 103.
(*b*) *Hobbs* Tripos, p. 314.
(*c*) *Spin. Op. Poſth.* p. 87, 88.
(*d*) *Ibid.* p. 399.
(*e*) p. 73.

2. To another Argument, for the freedom of Humane Nature; and that is, *the monſtrous Abſurdities and Conſequences* of the contrary Opinion. For the Aſſertion that all our Actions are neceſſitated, it perfectly deſtroys the Notions of Good and Evil, Rewards and Puniſhments, and of all manner of Obligation

gation both to Divine and Human Laws: and conſequently is the moſt Deſtructive Principle, that can be advanced, to the Good of Society. I have already proved that there is a Natural Diſtinction between Actions as to Good and Evil, that this is plainly diſcoverable by the Light of Reaſon, and that all Nations in all Ages of the World have been ſenſible of it; and if this be proved, (as I think it hath been) we ought not to deſert it, only becauſe we can't readily ſolve all the Difficulties about the Freedom of the Will of Man, which a Sceptical Man may raiſe againſt it; much leſs ought we to embrace an Opinion that *perfectly Contradicts it*; as this of abſolute Neceſſity certainly doth. For if all things and Actions whatever are abſolutely Neceſſary, and cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe than they are; there can be no ſuch thing as *Good* or *Evil*, *Right* or *Wrong*, *Honourable* or *Baſe*,&c. And why ſhould any Creatures trouble themſelves about paying any Veneration to the Deity, if that he could not help making them juſt ſuch as they are? and if he hath abſolutely neceſſitated them to do juſt as they do? God hath, according to theſe Horrid Principles, no Natural Right to any Obedience from us, as a free Agent would, who had out of his own gracious Goodneſs beſtowed ſo many Gifts and Mercies upon us. This Mr. *Hobbs* well knew, and therefore he tells us, That *there is no Obedience due to God out of Gratitude to him for Creating or Preſerving us*, &c. (*a*) *but what we pay him, is founded only in his Irreſiſtible Power.*

(*a*) *Leviath.* p. 187.

And ſo likewiſe, as to Human Laws and the Good of the Government or Commonwealth where we are placed. No Man, according to theſe Abominable

Tenets,

Tenets, hath any Obligation upon him to obey Rulers, to be juſt and honeſt in his Dealings, to be loving and merciful, helpful and beneficial to his Neighbours; but he may Rebel, Murder, Rob, and Oppreſs, without being Subject to any guilt at all; and if he can but eſcape Puniſhment from the Magiſtrate he is ſafe enough, and hath no reaſon to be diſturbed in his own Mind; for he can't help any of all this, he is under an abſolute neceſſity of doing what he doth, and no one ought to blame him for it. Indeed, *Spinoza* ſays, That the Government may, if they think fit, put ſuch a Man to Death; but not becauſe *he is Guilty and deſerves it*, but becauſe he is *Miſchievous* and *Dangerous* to them, and therefore is to be *feared*. And when one wrote to him on this Point, alledging, that if the *Will were not free*, *All Vice would be excuſable*; he Anſwers, *Quid inde* (a)? *Nam homines mali non minus timendi ſunt, nec minus pernicioſi, quando neceſſariò mali ſunt.*

(a) *Spinoz. Op. Poſthum.* p. 586

By which he plainly allows that all Wickedneſs is *excuſable*, tho' it be not always *tolerable*, as it is not when it becomes *formidable*. *Fear* is that which according to theſe Men doth every thing in the World, in this Caſe. A Subject pays Obedience to the Laws, not becauſe he thinks himſelf bound in Conſcience ſo to do, or becauſe it is juſt and reaſonable; but becauſe he is *afraid* of Puniſhment if he do not do it. And the Magiſtrates Puniſh an Offender, not becauſe they think he hath committed any Fault, or is Guilty of any Crime properly ſpeaking; but becauſe *They* are *afraid* of *Him*, and under an apprehenſion that he is likely to do them a Miſchief. And thus a Man that is guilty of all manner of Immorality, an Aſſaſſinator

of

of Princes, a Firer of Cities, a Betrayer of his Country, a Poiſoner, Coiner, a Common Robber, or the moſt flagitious Villain that can be imagined, is as Innocent as a Saint from any guilt of Sin he hath upon him; for he is *neceſſitated* to do what he doth, he can't help it, any more than another Man can, that acts virtuouſly, as 'tis called: and therefore he may and ought to have as much Peace and Satisfaction in his own Mind, and as much Reſpect and Honour paid him from others too, provided they are not *afraid* of him, as ever any Man had.

But will not ſuch a Principle as this be the moſt miſchievous and dangerous to Mankind that can poſſibly be? Doth it not open a Door to all the Wickedneſs that can poſſibly enter into the Heart of Man to commit? And conſequently ought not all Governments to *be afraid*, as they themſelves would expreſs it, of Men that vent ſuch Notions as theſe, ſo plainly contradictory to, and inconſiſtent with the Good of Human Society?

And as this is a moſt *pernicious*, ſo 'tis the moſt *Impudent* and *Daring* Opinion that ever was advanced: for it charges all Mankind in all Ages of the World, with the moſt groſs and palpable Folly that can be: For, beſides that it gives the Lye to the Experience and certain Knowledge of every Body, as I ſhewed before; it renders all Laws, and Rules of Action, and all the Sanctions of them, ridiculous: it makes all *Advice* and *Exhortation* uſeleſs, and to no purpoſe; all *Cenſure*, *Puniſhment* and *Reproof* is *Unjuſt and Unreaſonable*; All *Honours* and *Rewards* it renders *Unmerited*; And all *Knowledge*, *Wiſdom*, *Care* and *Circumſpection*, become by this means, the moſt foo-

liſh and unaccountable things in the World; for if all things are governed by Abſolute Fatality, any one may ſee that all theſe things ſignifie Nothing at all, but 'tis plain, the Wiſeſt Part of the World as they have been juſtly eſteemed, are in reality the greateſt Fools and moſt ſtupid Idiots that can be: for they encourage Men to act well, and diſcourage them from doing amiſs, by Elaborate and Studied Methods, when after all, 'tis impoſſible according to this Notion, that any one can poſſibly avoid doing juſt as he doth.

Nor can I ſee how theſe wonderful *Diſcoverers* themſelves, that have thus luckily found out that all Mankind are miſtaken in thinking themſelves Free, when they are not ſo; I can't ſee, I ſay, how according to their own Notions *they* can be acquitted from being as *Ignorant* and *Miſtaken*, and as arrant Fools as the reſt of Mankind. For why do they write Books, and ſpin out ſuch Elaborate Treatiſes as they fanſie they do? and why ſhould they ſet themſelves up above others, and expect Praiſe and Glory for their *fine Thoughts* and *elevated Notions?* they can't ſure be ſo *Ignorant* as to expect to convince any Body, or to Proſelyte any one over to their Opinion? Can any Man help being of that Opinion he embraces? if he can, he hath free Will, and is not neceſſitated to hold what he doth hold; which deſtroys all they are ſo ſtudiouſly advancing. But if he cannot alter his Opinion freely, but is abſolutely neceſſitated to believe what he doth believe; how ridiculous is it to pretend to Diſpute or Argue in ſuch a Caſe? They will ſay, no doubt, that they are neceſſitated to write, and can't help it: But if the Government ſhould Plead the ſame thing, for Puniſhing them for ſo doing; they

they would, we know, make a large out-cry againſt *Perſecution*, and the *Infringement of that Native Liberty*, that every Man hath to enjoy his own Opinion. For theſe Gentlemen make uſe of Liberty and Neceſſity, according as it beſt ſerves their purpoſe. When they commit Immoralities and Wicked Actions; they then ought not to be puniſhed either by God or Man, becauſe they are *neceſſitated to do it, and can't help it.* But if a Government, judging ſuch Notions deſtructive to the Good of Human Society, and contrary to the expreſs Word of God, thinks fit to Prohibit the Propagation of them, and to Puniſh the Authors of them: How do theſe Men then Cry up the *Liberty* of Human Nature? then every Man's Opinion ought to be free, no Compulſion muſt be uſed, every Man's Conſcience is to be his Guide, and the like. But how ridiculouſly Vain is all this, according to theſe Principles? Is not the Magiſtrate as much neceſſitated to Puniſh as they are to Offend? and the Government to *make Laws* as they are to *break* them? Oh by no means! They would *be free* to Sin and to commit Wickedneſs, and then *neceſſitated* not to be Puniſhed. They would have Men think them *neceſſitated* in all their Actions, ſo as to *excuſe* them from blame, and they would have the Magiſtrate *free* to forbear Puniſhing them, tho' he think them never ſo guilty. That is, in ſhort, they would do what they pleaſe, and no one ſhould call them to an Account for it; they would act like *Fools*, and yet be thought *Wiſe Men*; they would proceed contrary to Reaſon, and yet have the Reputation of having Principles, and purſuing the Dictates of Reaſon and Truth: And they would build themſelves a Reputation in the

the World by advancing Paradoxes contrary to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind: by pretending to a higher pitch of Knowledge than their Neighbours, and by calling all the rest of the World Fools and Ignorant. In a word they would say, with those in the Psalmist, *We are they that ought to speak, who is Lord over us.* This, I am fully perswaded, is what they aim at in all their Arguments and Objections against Religion, and particularly in the bustle that they make about this Point, of the *Absolute Necessity* of *All Events and Actions.* Which how weakly they Prove, and how contradictorily they Maintain, against the Common Sense and Experience of all Mankind, I think I have sufficiently shewn.

FINIS.

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